

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a white, ribbed ceramic cup filled with a latte. A stream of white milk is being poured from a spout into the center of the coffee, creating a swirling pattern on the surface. The background is dark and out of focus, with the words "COFFEE ROASTERS" partially visible on a dark surface.

# IMPACT REPORT 2022

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# Foreword

The turning point for us in 2022 was in April when DORSCON was brought down from Orange to Yellow; group size limit for events and activities was no longer needed, and safe distancing was not imposed anymore. The cafes became busier and we saw the full return of our mobile coffee cart and in-person coffee workshops.

In February and August 2022, we set up our café outlets in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Mediacorp campus respectively. During April to December, we also had a brand collaboration with Hypebeast to set up a coffee station in Mercedes-Benz showroom in Great World City to provide coffee for clients and guests. And to end off the year with a bang, in December we kickstarted our first “barista-as-a-service” outlet within the office of Toyota Tsusho Asia Pacific. At our peak, we had 9 locations running at any one time.

But not all locations were sustainable: financially and socially. Hence, we made the decision to exit from 5 locations between October 2022 to February 2023. The locations closed were Canberra Plaza, Baker X, Great World City, Civil Service College, and the Centre for Healthcare Innovation. The closures helped us to consolidate manpower to place resources into busier outlets, and we did a restructuring of roles to prepare ourselves for our flagship cafe, First Story Cafe.

We’re grateful for the continued acknowledgement of our work and awards received in 2022, namely the B-Corp certification (February), raise Venture for Good Grant (August), Steward Leadership 25 (November) and the DBS Foundation Grant (December). Our staff with disabilities have also been featured on social media and mainstream media. The sustainability of Foreword as an organization is our focus for 2023.

We are still a work-in-progress and we’re hopeful for what is to come. We still firmly believe in the social enterprise model where we will give the opportunities to underserved and disadvantaged communities at some expense of our business efficiency and profitability.



Wei Jie & Nadi (from left to right),  
Co-founders



# Our Purpose

## Coffee as a vehicle for change

Coffee is a people business. We leverage on the specialty coffee movement as a bridge between our staff with disabilities and society. We enable people with disabilities to work at our café outlets through redesigning our workflow. Every outlet is different and are designed to meet the needs of our staff (e.g. automated milk frothing system).

We hypothesize that social stigma towards persons with disabilities will reduce when customers interact more with us. This is what makes us Foreword - advocating for social inclusion with our staff with disabilities, and acknowledging that we are our own agents of change.





# What We Stand For

## Vision

To achieve an equitable and sustainable value chain that empowers stakeholders from farmers to consumers

## Mission

Inspiring the can-do spirit to realise the potential in every individual

## Values We Practice

**I**mproving the self

**M**eaningful engagement

**P**erson-centered

**A**ction-oriented

**C**ourage to try

**T**rusted relationships



# Creating Inclusive Employment Opportunities

According to Singapore government statistics, among resident persons with disabilities in the working ages of 15 to 64 in 2020 and 2021, on average, only 30.1% were employed, 3.8% were without a job and actively looking for one, and the remaining 66.2% were outside the labour force, with most of them citing poor health or disability as the main reason. (Source: SGENable)

EMP2030\* aims for the employment rate to reach 40% - this is an additional 10,000 PWDs to enter the workforce. The EMP2030 acknowledges employment as a medium for meaningful participation in society. Foreword supports this goal by providing a nurturing work culture to help every individual discover and build on their potential.

## Our approach:



**EMP2030\*: Enabling Masterplan 2030** (Source: [MSF](#))  
The EMP2030 sets out the vision for Singapore as an inclusive society in 2030. It was developed by, for, and with persons with disabilities and their caregivers.

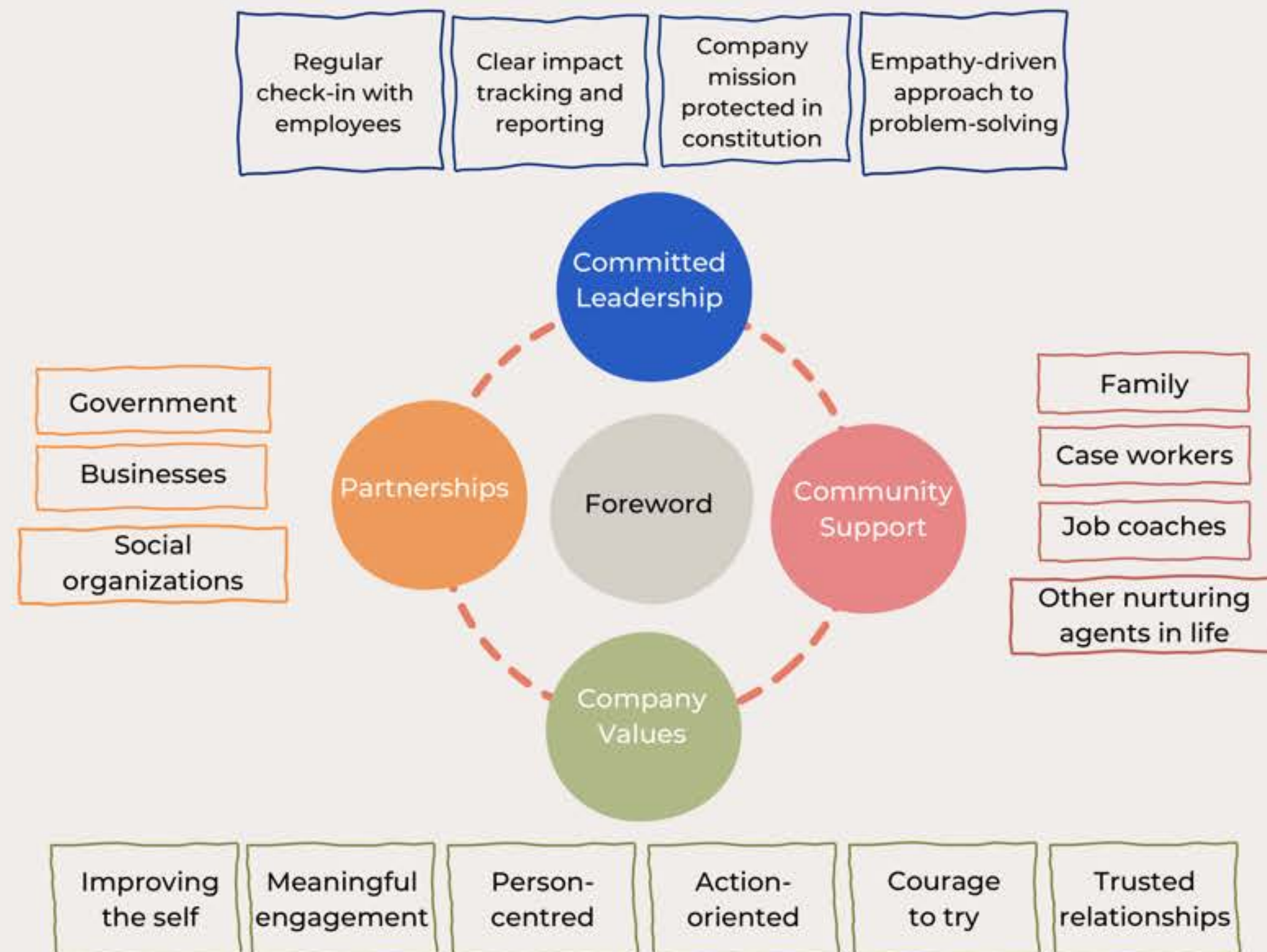


# Interdependent Stakeholder Engagement Model

Many people do not see the "heart" work behind our business. Underpinning our developing organization lies the six company values which we use to guide our actions and interactions with each other. Our leadership team believes in proper governance and being nurturing to develop the fullest potential in every individual.

In some sense, Foreword is also a "beneficiary" of larger organizations and we seek to build long-term partnerships with other organizations who would like to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to participate meaningfully in society.

We also receive support from the community and other social organizations. Some of our employees have job coaches and case workers who support them through regular check-ins. For others, we are in touch with their family members to help us manage behaviours at work. We acknowledge that work is just one part of our employees' lives, and that other aspects of their lives are also as important, or more important, than work itself.



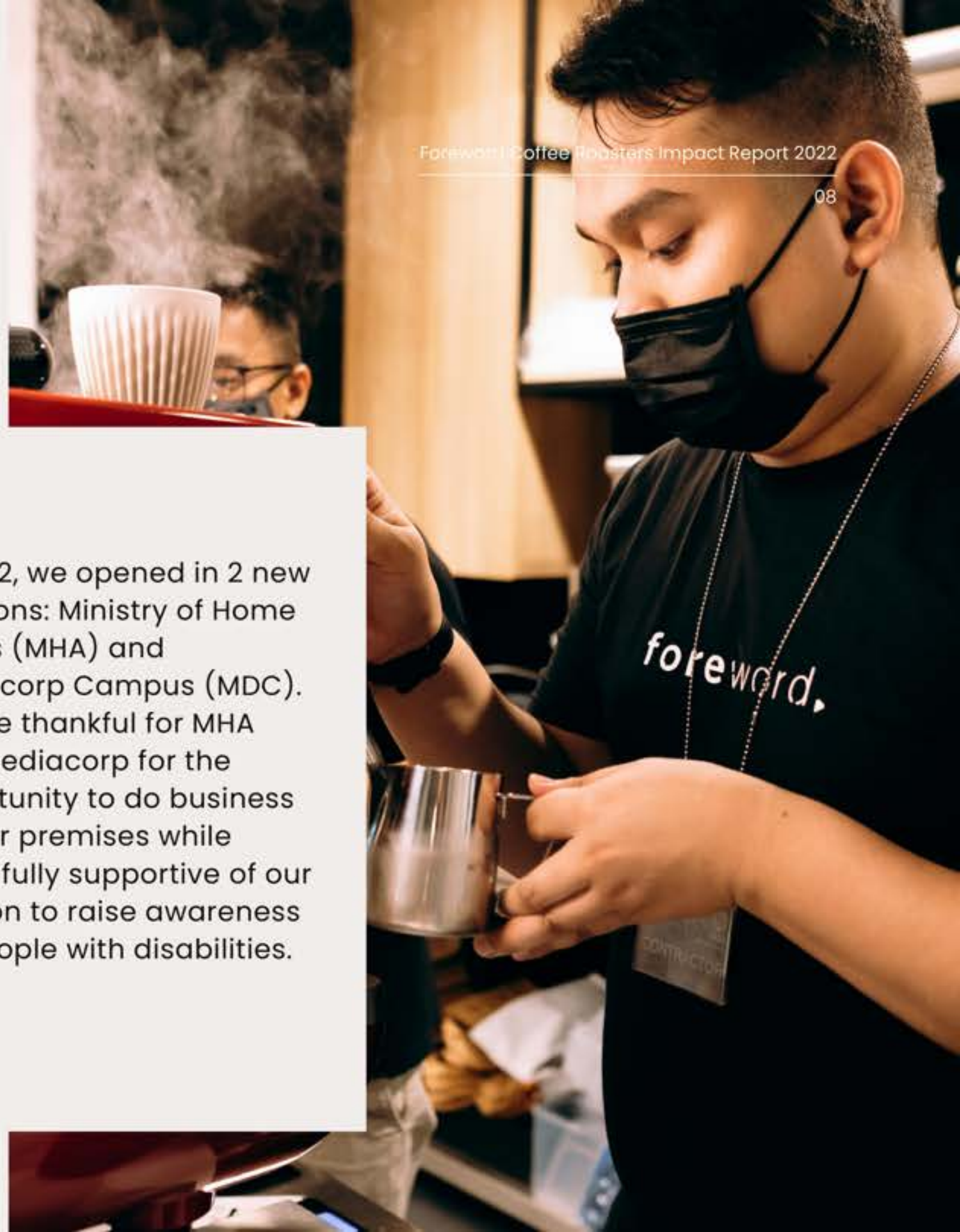


# 2022 Key Activities

## Fulfilling Our Growth Potential

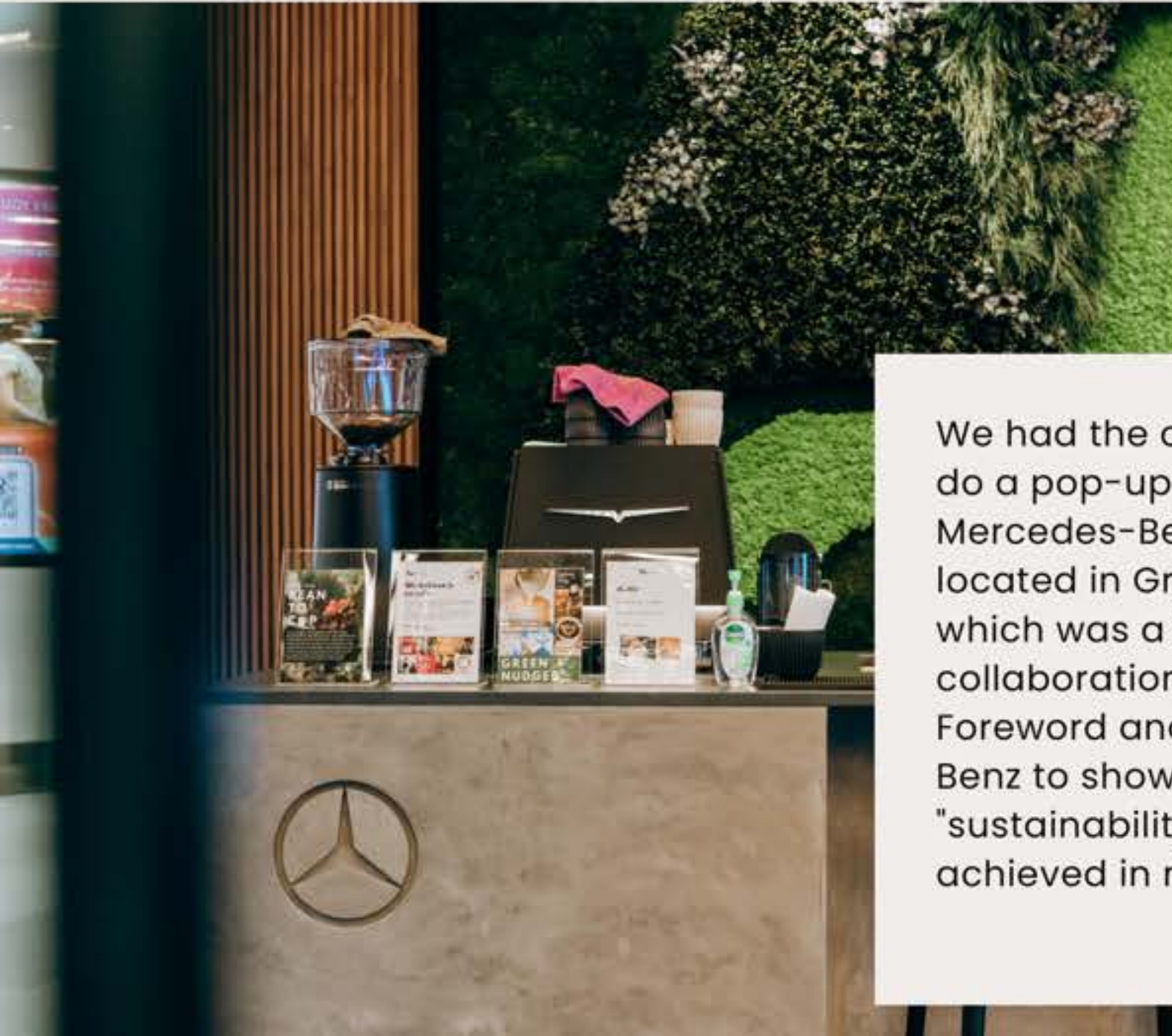


In 2022, we opened in 2 new locations: Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Mediacorp Campus (MDC). We are thankful for MHA and Mediacorp for the opportunity to do business in their premises while being fully supportive of our mission to raise awareness for people with disabilities.





# Brand Collaborations & Corporate Partnerships



We had the opportunity to do a pop-up in the Mercedes-Benz showroom located in Great World, which was a brand collaboration between Foreword and Mercedes-Benz to showcase how "sustainability" can be achieved in multiple ways.



Towards the end of 2022, we partnered Toyota Tsusho Asia Pacific (TTAP) and launched our first "Barista-as-a-Service" concept in their office. Through such win-win partnerships, Foreword is able to provide more employment opportunities while companies can provide good coffee and achieve their corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals at the same time. Businesses that are interested in this model of coffee service are welcome to approach us for more details.



# Services: Wedding Favours

## 703

bottled lattes served at weddings in 2022



Credits: Smittenpixels.co

Wedding couples are increasingly looking to gift meaningfully during the most important day of their lives. We are thankful for the many couples who have placed their trust in us to provide wedding favours and freshly brewed coffee for their guests.

We offer a variety of our coffee brew bags, bottled lattes and chunky cookies (baked in-house!) which can be customized according to the couple's preferences.

The best reward we get from providing wedding services are the affirmation from the guests when they enjoyed our coffee. This boosts our staff's morale for them to do a better job every time.



Credits: The Perfect Statement



# Services: Coffee Carts

## 9,145

cups of coffee served at corporate events

## 64

corporate events in 2022

"If the mountain will not come to Mohammed, Mohammed will go to the mountain." – this is how we view our coffee cart service. Each coffee cart project provides us an opportunity to share about our inclusive practices and sustainability efforts with the wider community. Through these coffee carts, our clients get to achieve multiple goals: Raising awareness for disability inclusion, improving employee welfare and enjoy freshly brewed coffee from sustainable sources.

Not every staff from Foreword is suitable to work at events due to the need to carry heavy loads, and to face a never-ending queue of guests waiting to get their caffeine fix. Nevertheless, our selected team for events are well-prepared for the challenge and we received many thumbs up for our work!



Find out more about our mobile coffee cart services here!



# Employee Experience

New staff will be welcomed with a set of Foreword t-shirt and apron, and be assigned to a cafe supervisor who will be in-charge of their development at work. Our cafe staff are expected to be proficient in at least one task at the end of one month and contribute meaningfully to the overall workflow at the cafe. Thereafter, we continue to guide our staff to pick up more skills and they can make progress in different tracks with us: front-of-house, back-of-house, and administration.



**Cafe opening**

The first task of the day starts with switching on the espresso machine. While waiting for the espresso machine to warm up, our café crew will set up the different work stations in preparation for a smooth workflow. Once the coffee is calibrated we are ready to go!



**The daily grind**

During peak periods, some staff may be assigned to do just one task so that they can contribute to the team without feeling overwhelmed.

Even then, some staff may get anxious with crowds, and our supervisors will have to manage their teammates' emotions while serving the orders. It's no easy task!



**Closing**

At the end of the day, our café teams have to make sure our equipment and work stations are clean.

Closing procedures may take longer than our goal of 30 minutes when it is busy. Staff will also have to ensure sufficient stocks for the next day before they head home.



# Building our People

*"I joined Foreword as I felt for Foreword's mission in employing persons with disabilities and special needs, not just in terms of integrating PWDs into a workplace but starting a business suitable for PWDs from the get-go. In short, I felt that the position of Foreword was very special in a cut-throat business world."*

*As Foreword grows as an organization, the nuances of a PWD-run café becomes more apparent where every individual have unique strengths and quirks. The challenge then is to create a platform where individual stories shine and connect with the general public at the same time.*

*-Grace, Head of Marketing (non-PWD)*





With the expansion of new café locations and an increased in number of events and wedding favours, we saw the need for more supervisory roles both administratively and in our cafés. At Foreword, we want to recognize staff who have contributed significantly and those who have stayed on with us. As our staff take on higher level roles, the management have more time and resources to newer initiatives and focus on Foreword's strategic planning.



### From Cafe Supervisor to Operations Executive



*"Even with my contribution to the cafés and events, I believe that everyone's effort counts towards spreading the Foreword culture to every part of Singapore. I would like to encourage customers to learn more about Foreword and learning to order drinks using simple sign language when they visit our cafés. I can be quite impatient at times but I still show care to all the crew, I always guide crews to follow the instructions and SOPs whenever possible."*

*-Victor, Operations Executive*

### From Cafe Crew to Cafe Shift Leader



*"I like it when the café is busy and having nice customers who visit our cafes. As a shift leader, I learnt how to teach and guide new staff."*

*I would also like to thank the management and supervisors for their guidance and support :)"*

*-Ambika, Café Shift Leader  
(previous role: Café Crew)*





# Our Team Portraits

Here's to celebrating our teams across all our locations in 2022!



**MediaCorp Campus**



**Temasek Shophouse**



**Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music**



**Barista-as-a-Service**



**Ministry of Home Affairs**



**Canberra Plaza**



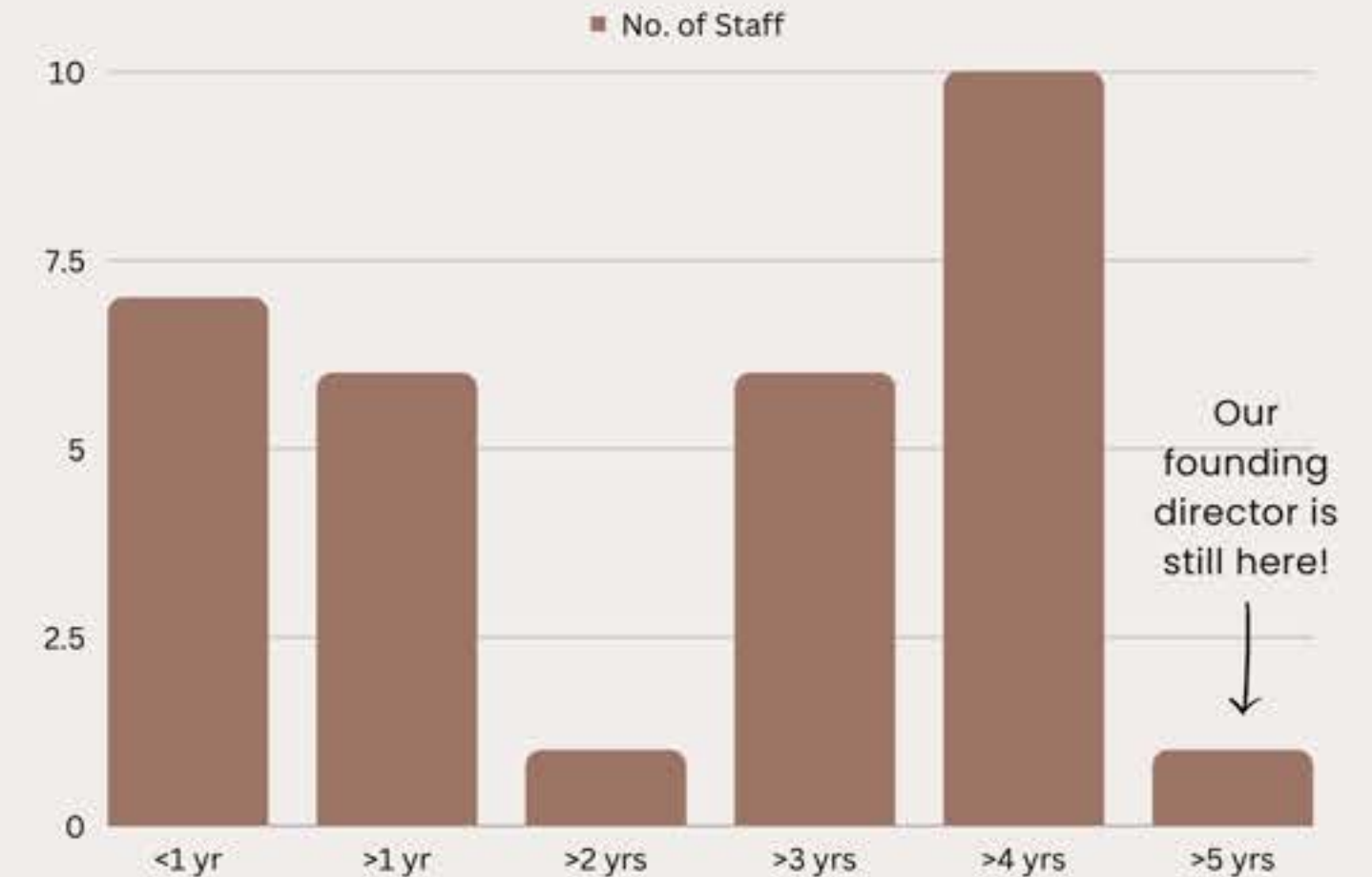
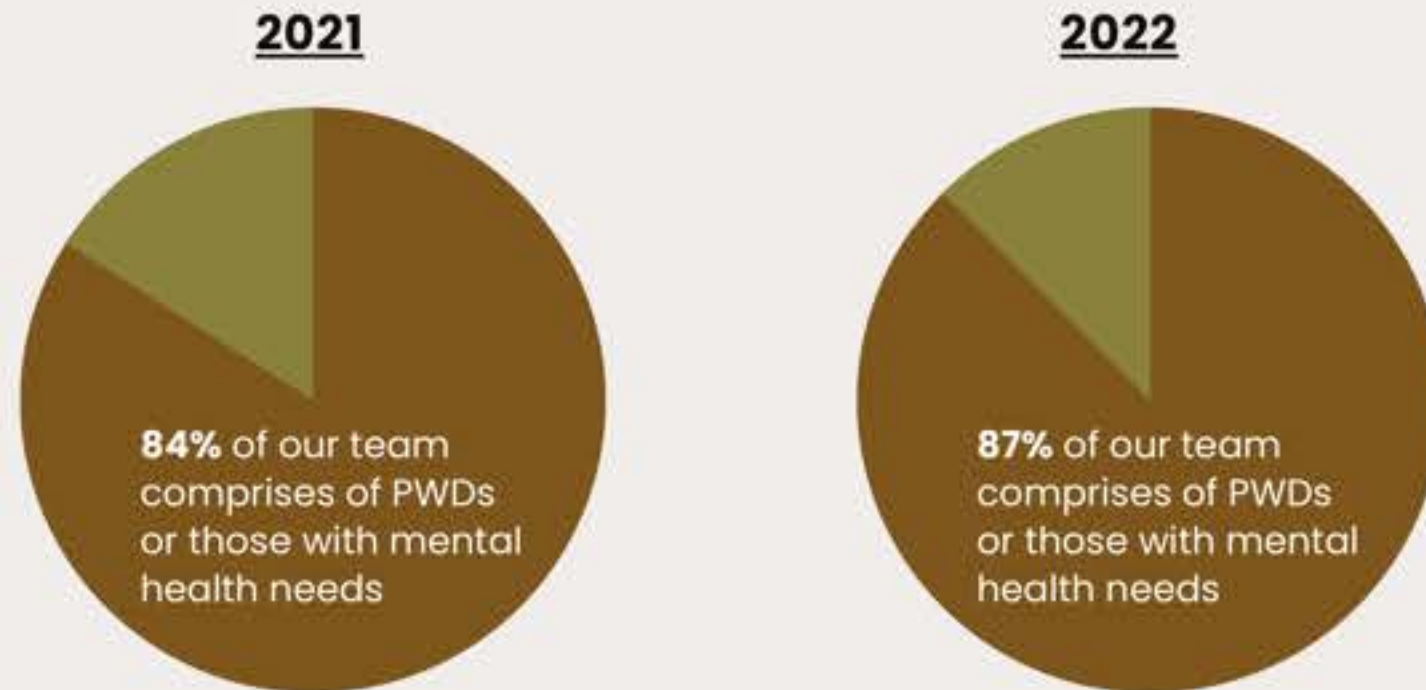
**Administrative Team**



# Commitment Towards Inclusive Employment

As of 31st December 2022, our company has 31 employees, and 27 staff identify as having a disability or mental health needs. This forms 87% of our total workforce. The median number of work years in the company is 3 years.

In 2022, we hired 10 new employees with disabilities and 7 of them are still in employment with us as of 31st December 2022.





# Internship and Traineeship

In 2022, we had a total of 16 youths from various Special Education (SPED) schools, Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs), and social service agencies (SSAs).

We'd like to thank our partners for supporting us in their internship programme and providing the youths with the necessary guidance and mentorship:



Organisation	Number of Interns
Cerebral Palsy Alliance School Singapore (CPASS)	2
DBS Business for Impact Winter Internship Program	2
Mindset Learning Hub	1
Spectra Secondary School	2
Trybe	2
Woodlands Garden School (Minds)	2
Others: Self-sourced interns	5



# SG Enable Training Grant

We have two training programs supported by the SG Enable training grant: (1) Fundamental Skills for Café Crews and (2) Basic Barista Skills. Each program has 5 sessions and a total of 20 hours.

These two courses are designed with the intention to prepare persons with disabilities to work as kitchen assistants and barista assistants in F&B establishments.

Through our training programs, trainees get to experience coffee-making and the barista workflow. We also emphasize the importance of workplace hygiene and organization. Some trainees eventually get employed by Foreword to work at our cafes and others may be placed with other organizations.

The funding period for our training programs is from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2024. We welcome enquiries and accept registrations on a rolling-basis.

For more information, do drop us a note at [hello@forewordcoffee.com](mailto:hello@forewordcoffee.com).



Trainee learning how to measure coffee grinds and preparing espresso.



Lattes prepared by some of the trainees.



# Managing our Resources



We saw the closure of 4 locations in 2022 including **BakerX, Civil Service College (CSC), Canberra Plaza (CBP)** and **Great World City**.

We are thankful for the partnerships with Far East Organization for BakerX and Hypebeast for the Mercedes-Benz showroom. Both projects were on a time-limited contract and it was a natural departure from these locations as the partnership period ended.

The decision to close CSC and CBP was after months of laggard sales due to the changes brought about by Covid-19. CSC was our first commercial outlet and the whole of CSC staff and course participants there have been really encouraging and supportive of our business model. Our team at CSC still miss working there a lot!

The space at CBP was a special one where it allowed our staff with special needs become more independent and confident as we adopted more automation in the coffee-making process. This was a fruitful experience for our staff and we thank our regulars who live in the Sembawang estate for supporting us.

At the time of this writing, our outlet at the **Centre for Healthcare Innovation (CHI)** has also closed, since February 2023. CHI was our 2nd outlet after CSC, and we are also very thankful for the support from the staff at Tan Tock Seng Hospital over the 4 years when we were there, especially during the Covid-19 period.







*"I like working for coffee cart events a lot, because it is fun. As we only serve coffee, premix drinks and tea, work pace is manageable compared to working in our café location with food menu items to prepare as well. From these events, I learnt to organize the queue and manage the drink orders using sugar packs and cup stirrers."*

*-Carmen, Café Crew*



*The team from Civil Service College are redeployed to Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music.*

*A collaboration with local home baker, Mon Cerise Patisserie, during our time at BakerX, where we co-created a coffee tart.*





# Our Community

Sharings & Community Engagement in 2022



**12**  
**school sharing sessions**

from mainstream secondary schools  
to local universities



**9**  
**corporate sharing &  
media interviews**

including radio talkshows and coffee  
sustainability journey sharing



**4**  
**community events**

from dialogue sessions to latte art  
workshops for SPED schools



**5**  
**learning journeys**

including SPED schools and university  
programs visits to cafes



# SG Cares Giving Week: Appreciating our SPED Sector

SG Cares Giving Week is an annual initiative taking place during Dec 1-7 that aims to inspire individuals and organizations to share their “time, talent, treasure and voice” in support of causes they are passionate about.

In 2022, we collaborated with fellow social enterprise **Flour Power** and Thye Hua Kuan's baking initiative, **"Knead with Love"** with the sponsorship and volunteer support from **DBS** to show appreciation to teachers and staff in five special education schools. In total, there were **68** DBS staff volunteers engaging **32** students with special needs in **10** coffee-making and baking workshops. We gave out appreciation packs comprising of cookies, bread, and a warm cup of coffee to **750** staff in Cerebral Palsy Alliance School Singapore (CPASS), Rainbow Centre Yishun Park School (YPS), Rainbow Centre Margaret Drive School (MDS), Eden School, and MINDS Fernvale Gardens School (FGS).



Read about our feature on  
The Business Times here!





# Sponsorships & Support

## \$3,200

worth of coffee brew bags were sponsored to events organized by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), National University of Singapore (NUS) and Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA). We have also supported events such as the President's Challenge 2022 and Purple Parade 2022.



*Carmen (left) and Beth represented us in Purple Parade 2022.*



*Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine Event (NUS)*



*President's Challenge 2022 (NCSS)*



# Our Environmental Efforts

## Repurposing Waste

Plastic waste is one of the top four largest waste streams in Singapore. In 2021, Singapore generated 982,200 tonnes of plastic waste, yet only 6% is recycled. (Source: National Environment Agency)

In a bid to reduce our contribution to plastic waste, we work with a local Environmental Conservation Organisation, Semula, to produce upcycled stools and tables since June 2021. These upcycled furniture is made from used milk bottles and caps from our cafes, along with abandoned logs salvaged from trees felled for urban development. They can be spotted in our outlets at Temasek Shophouse, Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, and First Story Cafe.



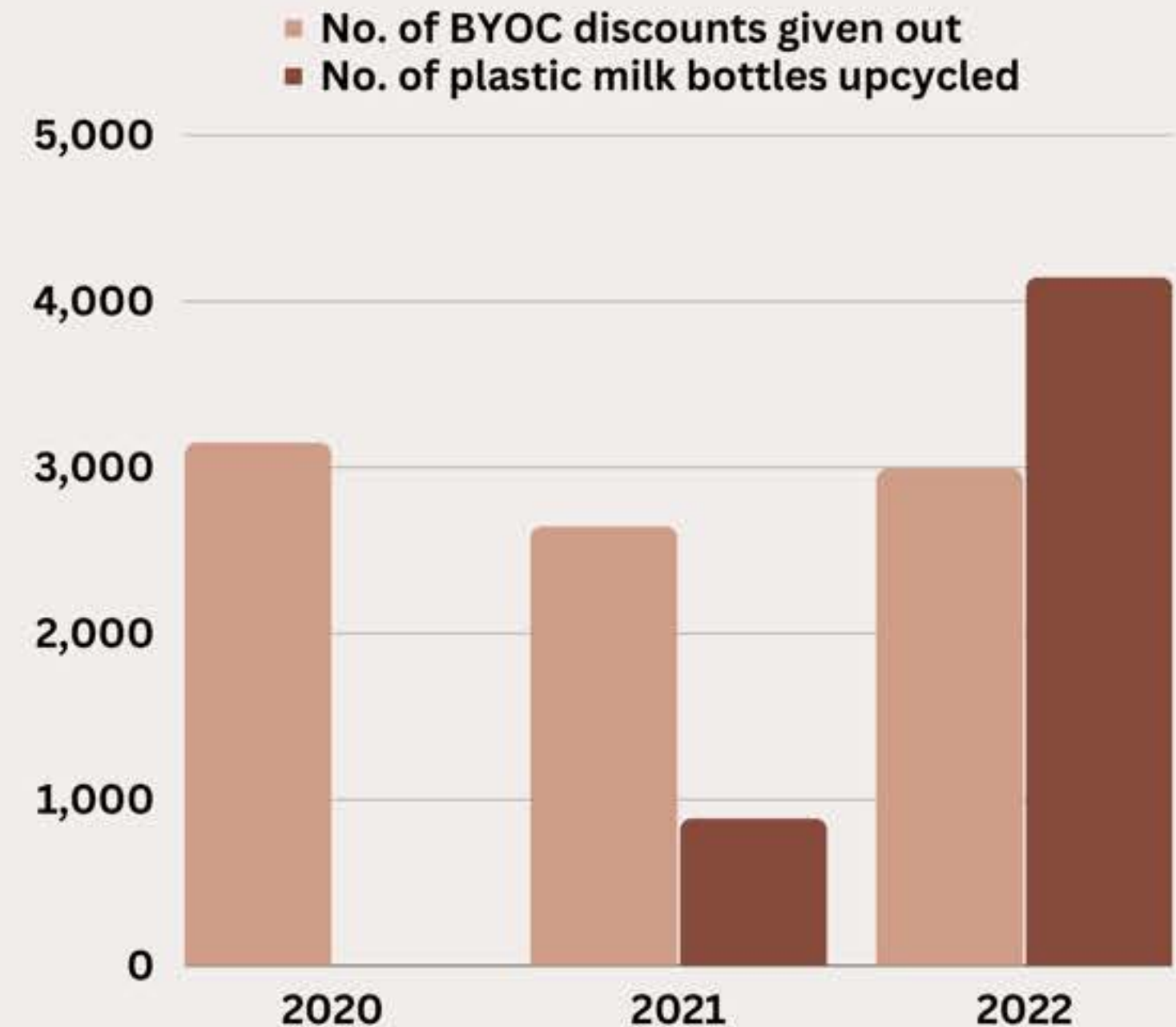
Find out how many milk bottles & caps one set takes!





# Green Initiatives at our Cafes

We have been implementing Bring Your Own Cup (BYOC) initiative at all our outlets since the first day of Foreword to incentivize our customers to do their part to reduce waste. The discount given is more than the cost of our takeaway cup but we feel that it is important for our customers to adopt a habit that conserves our planet's resources.





# Our Coffee Journey

## Series 3 Coffee Brew Bags



Since the launch of our series 1 coffee brew bags in January 2020, we continued to improve and update our varieties as the coffee season changes.

In 2022, we launched our series 3 coffee brew bags consisting of five varieties, including Diversity Blend, Java Pangalengan, Mooleh Manay, Ou Yang and Xamtai.

Just like a regular tea bag, no coffee brewing equipment is required, only steeping in hot water.

Besides convenience, coffee are packed in biodegradable sachets and are nitrogen-flushed to ensure freshness.





# Our Coffee Partners

As a micro-coffee roaster, the task of sourcing coffee on our own gets increasingly challenging each year.

The coffee industry is facing increasing demand and decreasing supply. Many large coffee buyers would snap up coffee by the container loads, which squeezes smaller importers like us out from the value chain.

It also makes more economic sense for coffee exporters to sell a container-load of coffee beans, rather than a few sacks of coffee beans per export.

Therefore, we are thankful for the coffee partners who have stood by us, securing coffee stocks for us before larger buyers purchase all of their stocks.

Note: our prices stated in the table includes cost of freight and prevailing GST.

Partner	Region	Coffee Beans	Price(SGD)/KG
 Yunnan Coffee Traders	Yunnan, China	Ou Yang Natural Badoo Natural Dongka Washed Kaku Washed	\$14.47 \$13.18 \$11.75 \$12.68
 Yuni Coffee Co.	Houaphan, Laos	Xam Tai Natural Xam Tai Washed	\$21.51 \$20.51
 Bright Java	Java, Indonesia	Pangalengan Washed Pangalengan Wet Hulled Sindoro Wet Hulled	\$15.36 \$15.17 \$10.16
 The South India Coffee Company	North Coorg, India	Mooleh Manay Honey Sundried	\$10.34



# Towards a Circular Economy

Most smallholder farmers cultivate in less than 2 hectares, or 5 acres, of land. Smallholder coffee farmers are responsible for between 70 and 80% of the world's coffee supply. Despite meeting a tremendous global need, approximately 75% of them live in poverty. (Source: Perfect Daily Grind)

Acknowledging this issue, we implemented a community fund, where 5% of the revenue earned from the sale of our coffee brew bags will be directed to community development projects in the Asian region. A circular value chain, where redistribution of gains from the end to the start of the supply chain, is necessary for us to continue enjoying coffee around the world.

We welcome enquiries from coffee producers to tap on our fund to support their projects. Be it to build new raised beds for drying coffee, or a new central washing stations for the coffee cherries, drop us a note at [hello@forewordcoffee.com](mailto:hello@forewordcoffee.com) with the subject title "Community Fund Support".





# 2022 Achievements

## 2022 AICA Ou Yang Bronze Award



Besides getting awarded Bronze Medal in the Australian International Coffee Awards (AICA) 2022, this coffee was also awarded Silver Medal previously in AICA 2020. Ou Yang coffee originates from Chilliarch Coffee Estate, where we paid a visit in January 2020.

One of the owners of the coffee company is Mr. Ou Yang, who gracefully shared his business and life philosophy with us. Mr. Ou Yang takes care of his people like his family and in turn, his people takes care of the coffee well which results in the high quality that we receive year after year.

## B Corp Certification



B Corp Certification is a designation that a business is meeting high standards of verified performance, accountability, and transparency on factors from employee benefits and charitable giving to supply chain practices and input materials. (Source: B Lab)

We attained the B Corp certification in February 2022. This certification serves as a benchmark and reminder for us to continue improving our work processes to truly embody the spirit of using business as a force for good.



# Key Media Mentions

## **DBS Foundation Grant**

In 2022, after 2 tries of applying in previous years, we finally got into the DBS Foundation Grant Programme. The DBS Foundation Grant Programme is DBS's flagship programme to support Social Enterprises (SEs) and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Since 2014, DBS Foundation has provided over SGD 13 million in grant funding and supported over 100 social enterprises and 8 SMEs in growing sustainable businesses and creating a positive impact. (Source: DBS)

The grant that we received will be used to set up Foreword's flagship bakery café and support us in hiring and training more persons with disabilities in the future.



## **Steward Leadership 25 (SL25)**



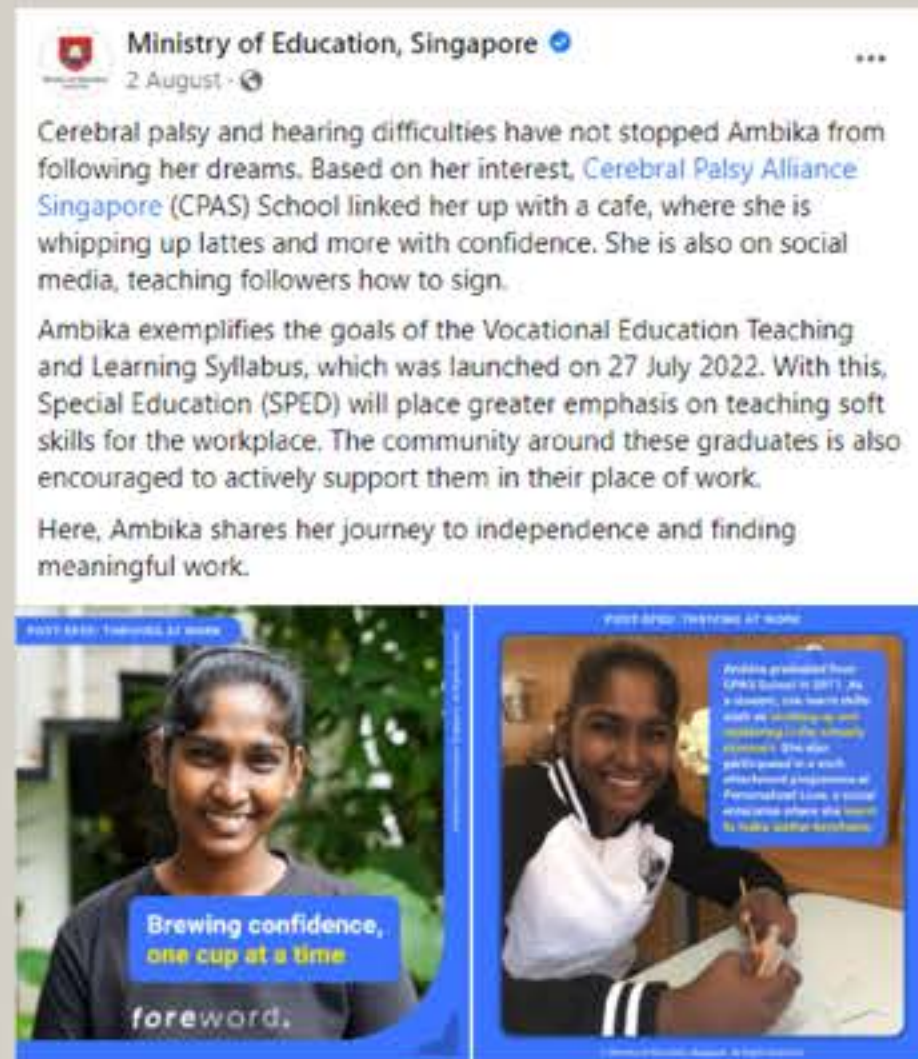
SL25 seeks to showcase the 25 best narratives from organizations that have demonstrated resolute actions in pursuing and achieving their own unique versions of stewardship purpose while living stewardship values. (Source: GBSN)

The story of social enterprise model was selected to be in the inaugural list of 25 steward leadership examples. "A work integration model for social inclusion" - Foreword exists to fill the employment and engagement gap for persons with disabilities (PWDs) upon graduation from special education schools. Specifically, we support PWDs who require additional support and a longer runway to be gainfully employed.

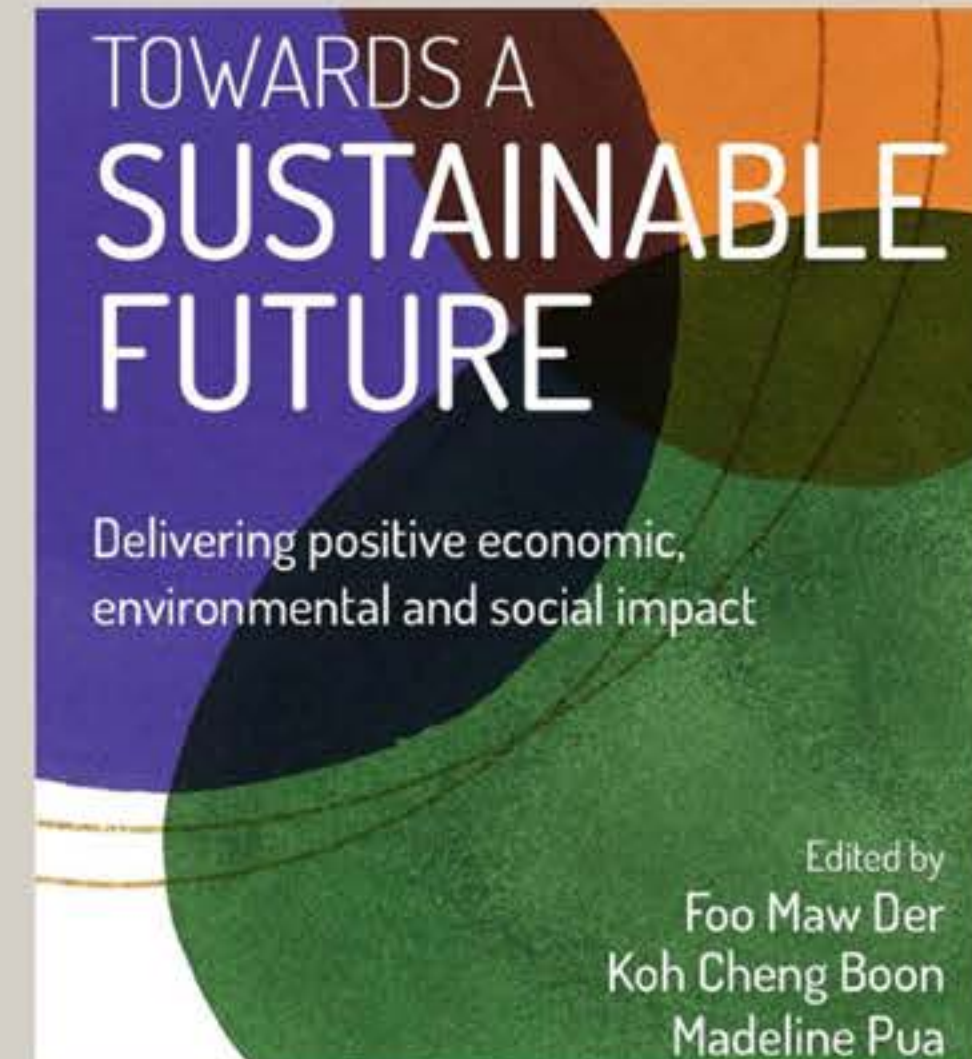


# Key Media Mentions

Please refer to Appendix for full list of media mentions in 2022.



Our barista, Ambika, was featured on MOE's Facebook and shares about her journey joining Foreword Coffee from MOE's SPED programme.



Our co-founder, Wei Jie, shared his story in a case study on how a hole-in-the-wall cafe started with \$20k from his own savings grew into the organization it is today and his experience in weaving through "stuck moments" in trying to bring Foreword to another level.



# The Impact Forward

## Flagship Cafe



Towards the end of 2022 we were readying ourselves with the launch of our flagship cafe, First Story. This cafe is located at Golden Ginger, a HDB block in the Serangoon North neighbourhood.

First Story continues the ethos of Foreword, as we bring inclusivity into the community. In this outlet, we serve all-day breakfast, gelato and waffles, and we also have a smart coffee roasting system that allows us to roast our coffee in-house.

First Story officially opened in January 2023 and we have since conducted workshops and learning journeys here. We envision this space to host more collaborative events and to invite the public to learn more about why we do what we do.



Follow First Story on Instagram!



# Thank you





# Appendix

## List of media mentions in 2022



### **Towards a Sustainable Future**

Nanyang Technological University



### **Foreword Coffee: Marrying Passion and Mission**

Asian Business Case Study NBS



### **Day in the Life of a Barista**

NUS Giving



### **Baristas (A Short Documentary)**

ZANY



### **Brewing opportunities for the disabled a cup at a time**

Stewardship Asia



### **Inclusivity In The Workplace**

City of Good



### **MOE SPED branch**

Ministry of Education



### **Try food creations inspired by animal diets from these 10 local F&B brands & do good for the planet**

Mothership





# Appendix

## List of media mentions in 2022



### **Doing good makes good business sense: 25 firms lauded for steward leadership**

The Straits Times



### **Create an Inclusive Workplace by Looking Beyond Disabilities**

TAFEP



### **首个“尽责治理领导25”名单出炉 25家亚太企业入榜**

ZaoBao



### **Companies celebrate the season of giving**

The Business Times



### **'Temasek's Stewardship Asia Centre honours 25 APAC organizations for exemplary steward leadership**

The Edge Singapore



### **Employing Persons with Disabilities**

National Youth Council Singapore



### **DBS SG Cares Giving Week**

DBS



### **DBS Foundation awards new grants to 23 recipients, including SMEs**

DBS

