

Specialisterne launches in Singapore to enable employment for autistic people

Singapore operation is latest in worldwide expansion of successful and award-winning international social enterprise

SINGAPORE, November 30th, 2017 – Specialisterne, an internationally recognized leader in harnessing the talents of autistic people, launched today in Singapore. Specialisterne Singapore is teaming up with employers, government, community and partners to provide people on the autism spectrum – an under-utilized human resource – with the opportunity to obtain meaningful and sustained employment.

Originally founded in Denmark in 2004 by Thorkil Sonne, a parent of a child on the autism spectrum, Specialisterne has turned into a global movement with the parent organization Specialisterne Foundation as a platform designed to enable 1 million jobs globally for autistic people. In Singapore, Specialisterne aims to work closely with partners to provide an additional opportunity for the ASEAN countries to demonstrate how autistic people can excel in the work place, increase quality of life and become more included in the community.

“There is so much opportunity for us in Singapore to enable meaningful and productive jobs for the growing number of people diagnosed with autism,” says Thorkil Sonne, Founder of Specialisterne. “There is clearly a readiness and excitement here and we are confident that the combination of our operational experience from 17 countries, and a very strong and dedicated leadership in Singapore, will add value to existing employment opportunities and benefit all stakeholders. Our ambition is that Specialisterne Singapore will be a hub for making a change for autistic people in the ASEAN region”

The Specialisterne model has made an impact by identifying and cultivating the strengths and capabilities of individuals on the autism spectrum – many of them with unique skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Through specialized hiring, onboarding and management practices, employees and employers will be able to tap into “the autism advantage” and expand careers and business.

“Social enterprises like Specialisterne make our communities stronger and help to build a fair and inclusive employment for everyone. Singapore NCSS recently released for the second year “See the True Me” campaign - A Social Enterprise Strategy for Singapore, positioning Singapore as leader in social enterprises when assuming the ASEAN Chair in 2018. Social enterprises, like Specialisterne, make good business sense and help people with autism find meaningful job opportunities,” Ambassador of Denmark to Singapore, Dorte Bech Vizard.“

A key objective for Specialisterne in Singapore will be to showcase to corporate Singapore how employment of autistic people makes sense not just in terms of meeting diversity and inclusion goals, but also as because it makes good business sense. The company has a record of recruiting for a variety of technology roles among its corporate clients among those SAP, Microsoft, Everis, Maersk, Danfoss, EY, Accenture, PWC, IBM and other major corporations.

“Thorkil was one of many inspirational leaders that the Singapore International Foundation (SIF) had the privilege to host in 2011 to catalyse conversations in social entrepreneurship and inspire action for change. Then, social impact businesses were little known in Singapore and the SIF had started a Young Social Entrepreneurs programme to inspire, equip and enable youths to start social enterprises in Singapore and beyond. With Specialisterne launched in Singapore today and its sights set on sustainable employment for persons with autism in ASEAN, we look forward to

working together to inspire more young changemakers and to building a more inclusive Asia,” said Jean Tan, Executive Director of SIF.

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About Specialisterne

Specialisterne translates from Danish as “The Specialists,” and was originally founded in Denmark by Thorkil Sonne in 2004. Specialisterne is a socially innovative business that uses the characteristics of autistic people as a competitive advantage, and as a means to help autistic people secure meaningful employment. Today, Specialisterne has experience from Australia, Austria, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, India, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, U.S.A.. The Specialisterne concept is owned by Specialisterne Foundation Denmark.

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