

JAN 2024

# ScandAsia



## **BUSINESS:**

Vietnamese-Danish  
Graphic Design Company

## **COMMUNITY:**

Scandinavian Christ  
Service in Bangkok

## **INTERNATIONAL:**

Finnland wants investigation  
of Chinese vessel

Theme:  
**Penang Medical  
Tourism**



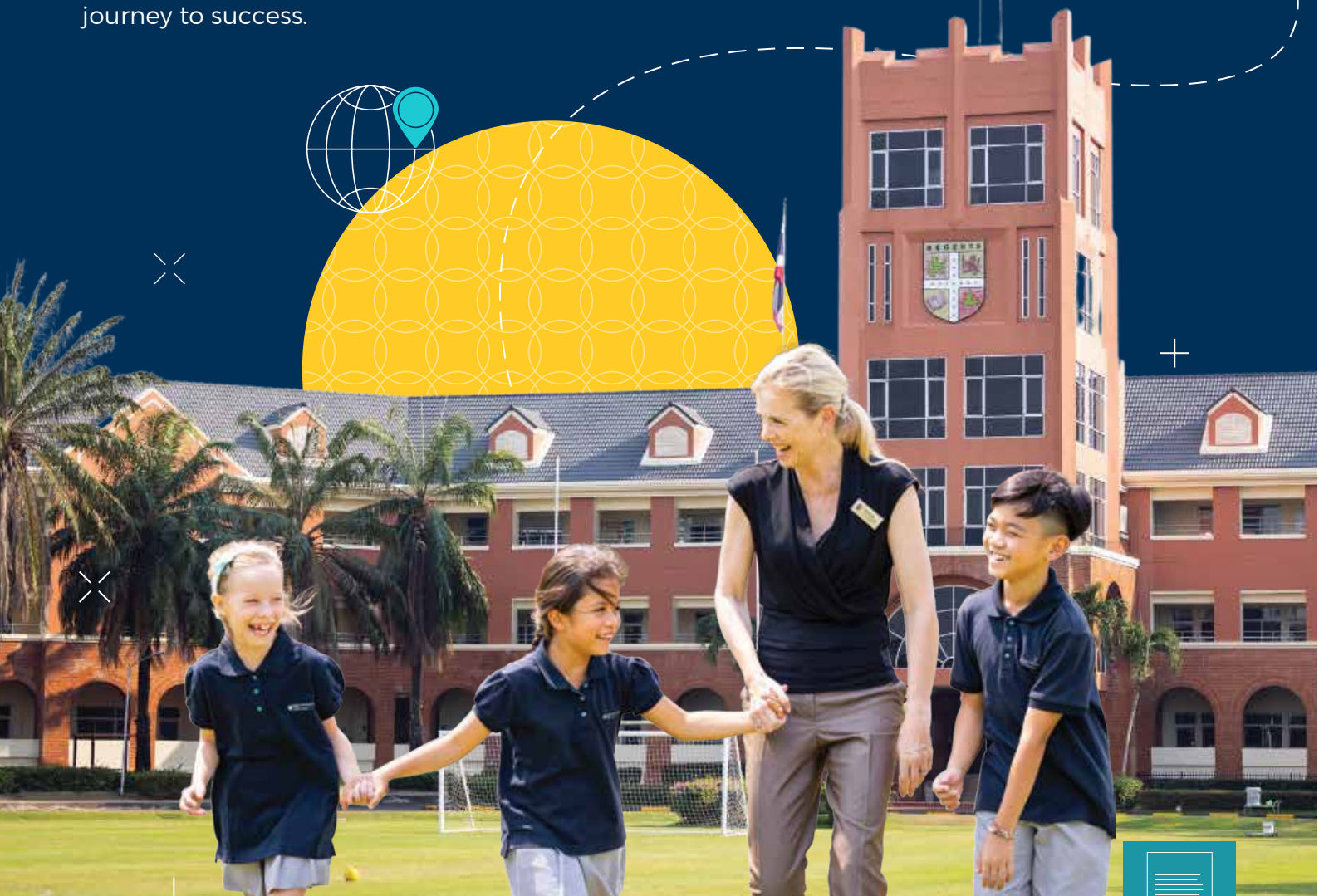


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# SENIOR BRAIN BOOSTER:

## Preserving and improving memory as we age

Everyone might forget certain things at times. How often have you misplaced your keys or forgotten the names of persons you just met? Memory problems as well as a modest decline in other skills is a major part of aging. However, there is a difference between normal changes in memory and memory loss associated with relevant disorders.

Memory loss or cognitive decline can lead to deterioration in motor skills, confusion, language difficulties, and impaired behavior. A specialized neurologist performs history taking, physical examination, and memory tests to rule out secondary causes like vitamin B12 deficiency, hypothyroidism, HIV, syphilis, stroke, brain tumors, and normal pressure hydrocephalus. If cognitive decline has developed without other potential causes, a confirmatory diagnosis can be minor or major neurocognitive disorders. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause, but other forms include vascular dementia, frontotemporal dementia, Lewy body dementia, and Parkinson's disease dementia. Accurate diagnosis is crucial for treatment planning and disease progression.

### Special Investigations of Memory Disorders

To precisely diagnose memory disorders, genetic tests, lumbar puncture and special imaging called PET scan may be requested especially if patients have certain indications.



**Genetic tests** are used to identify the genetic causes of Alzheimer's disease include:

- APOE gene in early-onset patients
- PSEN1, PSEN2, and APP genes in familial Alzheimer's disease
- C9orf72 gene in frontotemporal dementia

### Lumbar puncture

is used to evaluate central nervous system infection and investigate abnormal proteins in neurocognitive disorders.

**The PiB PET scan/amyloid PET scan** uses positron emission tomography (PET) to detect beta-amyloid plaques in the brain, which are abnormal proteins found in Alzheimer's patients.

**FDG PET scan** assesses brain metabolism, a biomarker for neurodegeneration, which varies among different types of neurocognitive disorders.



### Treatment of Memory Disorders

Currently, neurocognitive disorders have not yet been fully treated, but medications that delay or slow disease progression can improve patient and family quality of life. Early diagnosis is crucial for optimal outcomes and cognitive function preservation.

To improve cognitions, neurologists advise patients and families to continue physical activity and cognitive training combined with medical treatments. Trainings are, for example, painting, calculation, playing card and Sudoku. In addition, patients have to avoid falling, control their cardiovascular diseases and infections which can substantially deteriorate disease progression.

**Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS)** is a non-invasive treatment for neurocognitive disorders, generating a magnetic field that induces an electrical current in the brain. It can stimulate or inhibit neuron cells, and patients don't feel pain during administration. TMS can be performed on an out-of-office basis and lasts between 20 minutes and 1 hour.

More importantly, Caregivers and family members should regularly check-up and join support groups, while taking time for personal social activities and relaxation. To minimize neurocognitive disorders in non-developing individuals, avoid head injuries, maintain cognitive activity, exercise, control blood pressure, sugar, cholesterol, LDL, quit smoking, eat healthy, and avoid drugs affecting cognitive functions. Depression should be treated as a contributing factor to Alzheimer's disease.



#### Reference:

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# Do social media algorithms amplify depression?

In an era dominated by digital connectivity, social media platforms have become integral to our daily lives, influencing how we perceive the world and engage with others. Amidst this digital landscape, a critical inquiry emerges: Do social media algorithms contribute to the amplification of depression?

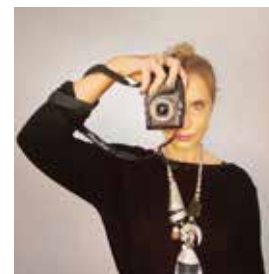
Depression has become a steadily increasing mental health concern globally. Even in Scandinavian countries, renowned for their reputation as the world's happiest nations, battles with mental health challenges. A 2022 study revealed that Finland, often deemed the happiest country, ranked eighth in global clinical depression diagnoses. A similarly study from 2018 found that around 28 percent of Norwegians self-diagnose depression at some point in their lives. In an era where depression rates are on the rise, the question of whether social media aggravates these cases remains.

Initially designed to connect people, foster relationships and provide a platform for self-expression, the original intent is now overshadowed by algorithms governing our news feeds and timelines. Algorithmic content curation aims to engage users by presenting tailored content based on preferences. While this may seem harmless, it inadvertently reinforces existing beliefs and limit exposure to diverse perspectives. When it comes to mental health, this can become a problem.

The issues connected with users being constantly flooded with carefully curated clips into others' lives, that foster unrealistic expectations that contribute to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem, is already well-known as "social media-induced depression."

A more recent concern associated with social media is the unintentional amplification of negative content. A recent study by the Danish organization Digital Responsibility tested the Chinese platform TikTok's algorithm. The test revealed the platforms targeted approach towards vulnerable users. By posing as 13 or 18-year-olds searching for self-harming content, the organization found that TikTok actively displayed self-harm or suicide-related content to these vulnerable profiles. In some instances, self-harming content constituted 70-80 percent of the feed, reaching 80-100 percent in others.

Addressing the question of whether social media algorithms amplify depression is complicated. While these algorithms revolutionize connections, they also present substantial challenges to mental well-being. Perhaps it is time for a collective effort to cultivate a digital environment that prioritizes mental health, empathy and authenticity and see what that would do to the increasing cases of depression.



**Miabell  
Mallikka Smedegaard**

## ScandAsia

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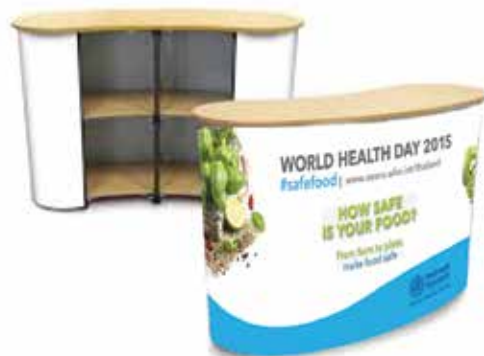
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# The Famous Tiara of Princess Sofia -Made in Thailand

Princess Sofia of Sweden wore a unique tiara during the 2023 Nobel Prize Banquet in Stock-

holm. Renowned for its distinctive feature allowing the princess to interchange the gemstones adorning

its pinnacle. Often referred to as the Palmette Tiara, it held green gems during the Nobel Prize ceremony last Sunday. However, at the subsequent Nobel Dinner a day later, these were replaced.

The tiara made its debut at Princess Sofia's wedding in 2015, presented as a generous gift from her parents-in-law, King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden. Intriguingly, reports from the Swedish press unveiled the tiara's origin, disclosing that Queen Silvia possessed an emerald and diamond necklace, originally bestowed upon her by a Thai prince. Allegedly, Queen Silvia had the necklace sent back to Thailand for a remarkable transformation into the now-famous tiara.



## Danish expats will find it easier to bring their family home to Denmark

In an effort to enhance opportunities for Danish expatriates to bring their families back to Denmark, the government is set to introduce a new scheme. Simultaneously, adjustments will be made to the language requirement.

In recent instances, highly educated expats have declined lucrative job offers in Denmark solely because they faced difficulties bringing their families along. It has been observed that it is more straightforward for foreigners without ties to Denmark to relocate their families through occupational schemes than it is for established Danish citizens residing abroad.

The Danish government now aims to implement a residence scheme that will grant returning

Danes the ability to bring their families home, aligning with the terms applicable to foreign workers.

Additionally, there will be modifications to the language requirements associated with spouse reunification. This adjustment comes in response to cases where Danish citizens were denied reunification because they couldn't prove their proficiency in Danish, despite it being their mother tongue.

Under the new rules, individuals can meet the language requirement by demonstrating five years of employment, involving at least 30 hours per week, where they communicated in Danish to a reasonable extent, eliminating the need for a language test.

"The aim of the rules is to



ensure that individuals with a foreign background do not bring their spouses here before mastering proper Danish themselves. I believe this is a reasonable approach," he stated. "We need to strike the right balance to prevent any inappropriate impacts while avoiding opening floodgates. I believe we have found that balance now," said Kaare Dybvad Bek, the Minister for Immigration and Integration, in a press release.



# Maersk plans to invest in Southeast Asian supply chain

A .P. Moller-Maersk is set to invest over \$500 million in expanding its supply chain infrastructure in Southeast Asia. The three-year plan is focusing on strengthening its Logistics and Services arm along with its Ocean and Terminals infrastructure.

“Our investment reflects the commitment to being the global logistics integrator. We strive to address the changing needs of our customers, while remaining steadfast to our decarbonization agenda,” Vincent Clerc, CEO of A.P. Møller-Maersk, stated.

The investment is anticipated to create job opportunities, enhance automation efficiencies, and strengthen Maersk’s footprint in Southeast Asia.



The company plans to scale its warehousing and distribution footprint by up to 50 percent. Maersk will be adding nearly 480,000 square

meters of capacity across Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines by 2026.

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## Finland presses for investigation into deliberate damage to Baltic Gas pipeline

Finland's Minister of European Affairs, Anders Adlercreutz, has raised serious concerns over the intentional sabotage of the Balticconnector gas pipeline, damaged in October, indicating that evidence points to deliberate actions rather than accidental occurrences.

"I think everything indicates that it was intentional. It's hard to believe sabotage to the undersea gas pipeline was accidental," stated Adlercreutz, casting doubt on the possibility of the incident being unintentional.

The Chinese container ship Newnew Polar Bear is identified as the main suspect. The ship allegedly dragged its anchor across the seabed, damaging cables and gas lines.

Adlercreutz has expressed doubts about the incident being accidental and questioned China's knowledge or involvement. "I would think that you would notice that you're dragging an anchor behind you for hundreds of kilometers," he added.

Finland, actively underscoring its role in the investigation, has urged authorities to board the Hong Kong-flagged vessel, NewNew Polar Bear.

"We hope, and actually require, that Finnish investigators be involved," President Sauli Niinisto emphasized.

The vessel, owned by Hainan Xin Xin Yang Shipping, was en route to China after transiting Russia's Arctic. Investigators have discovered

extensive drag marks on the seabed, spanning hundreds of kilometers, indicating the breach of the 77-kilometer Balticconnector gas pipeline on October 8.

Both Finland and Estonia are actively seeking China's cooperation in the investigation, underscoring the diplomatic dimension of the incident. The occurrence has triggered concerns about the safety of undersea critical infrastructure, prompting calls for enhanced protection and surveillance measures for suspicious ships. The ongoing inquiry aims to unravel the circumstances surrounding the intentional damage to the Baltic gas pipeline and address potential threats to vital energy infrastructure.



# WHO recognizes Thailand and Denmark for effort in eliminating trans-fat from food

The World Health Organization (WHO) has certified countries committed to eliminating trans-fat from their food industries, with Thailand and Denmark ranking among the top five for their exemplary policies.

“Being recognized by the WHO signifies that our policy practices meet international standards in the effort to eliminate trans-fat. We are committed to continuing their implementation for the optimal health benefits of the Thai population,” said Dr. Narong Aphikulwanit,

representing Thailand's Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Research indicates that trans-fat consumption poses health risks, contributing to an elevated incidence of coronary heart disease events and mortality. Sources of trans-fat include margarine, artificial cream, industrially used oils, and fats in baked and fried foods, pre-packaged snacks, as well as certain cooking oils used at home, in restaurants, or in street food.

The WHO recommends replacing trans-fat with healthier oils,



asserting that this transition is cost-effective, life-saving, and feasible without compromising the taste of food or imposing additional costs on consumers.



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## Danish Maria wins title in Mrs. National Universe Thailand 2023

**M**aria Andreasdottir from Denmark, proudly participated in the Mrs. National Universe 2023 beauty contest held in Thailand, where she won the title of Mrs. National Globe. The Grand Final unfolded at Amari in Hua Hin and was live-streamed on Facebook, allowing viewers to revisit the contest.

Throughout the competition, participants showcased a variety of stunning gowns and navigated through multiple rounds leading up to the revelation of the top five finalists. Maria was among the final five finalists, where each contestant answered a question. Maria's question centered around the concept of inner beauty, to which she responded:

"When I was little, my grandmother always said to me that you have to leave a little sparkle wherever you go. It means to always show

kindness, compassion, and help others. To me, that is true beauty within, something we all possess and that we all need to embrace. Be beautiful," Maria answered.

Maria's response secured her the coveted title of "Mrs. National Globe." Taking to her Instagram account, Maria expressed her gratitude and excitement, announcing her new role as an influencer for the cosmetic brand "Chat Cosmetics." In a post, she extended her thanks to the organizers, judges, fellow participants, and her personal supporters.

"This pageant has been a transformative experience, and I'm beyond honored to have shared it with such extraordinary individuals. Let's keep spreading love, inspiration, and the magic that makes us uniquely beautiful. Thank you all so much for your support and kindness," Maria concluded.

For readers who find the name familiar, it's not a coincidence. Maria Andreasdottir served as a Bangkok-based journalist intern at ScandAsia from August 2015 to January 2016. She continued her journalistic journey as a Singapore-based journalist from February 2016 until July 2016 before returning to Denmark, where she successfully graduated as a journalist from the University of Southern Denmark, SDU.



# Online Norwegian primary education for kids abroad

The Norwegian Globalskolen is revolutionizing education by providing a comprehensive online platform for primary and lower secondary students worldwide. The initiative primarily targets children living abroad or those navigating Norwegian as a primary or second language.

The program's interactive virtual classrooms demand a minimum commitment of 90 minutes per assignment, fostering a dynamic learning environment. Globalskolen's unique approach has garnered official approval from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, placing it firmly within the framework for supplementary education.

Globalskolen is more than just an educational platform. It serves as a cultural bridge, allowing students



to stay connected with Norwegian traditions and values. As the application window for the upcoming spring semester in 2024 approaches, interested families are encouraged to submit their applications by the

deadline on January 31st.

This concept represents a golden opportunity for students globally to access high-quality Norwegian education, transcending geographical boundaries.



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# Fostering friendships

*By Carol Battram, Assistant Principal, Learning & Welfare, Bangkok Patana School*

I last wrote about friendship before Covid brought so much disruption into our lives so I thought it would be interesting to revisit the subject and share what I think has stayed true.

## Stop-press! Friendships are important!

Friendships are still a source of joy – and heartbreak. Many of us still spend too much time sending each other nonsense memes and placeholder messages and far too little time catching up in person. At Bangkok Patana, we plan opportunities to excite, motivate and engage our students. We try to design engaging and positive classroom environments. We build relationships with our students so that we can best meet their needs. None of this, not one iota, will stimulate their brains in the same all-encompassing way as a friendship high or a break-up low.

## Friendships change and that's OK

A small number of my friends have remained constant for 30+ years but most friendships come and go. Some flourish with minimal care whilst others feel like the worst sort of unrewarded work. I've invested heavily in some friendships that have come to nothing – which nearly always hurts. It's really not that much different for our students – except that they also have to live out their formative years with a continuously rotating door of arrivals and departures.

## Teaching the skills and the language of friendship

We get marginally better at navigating friendships, but mainly through trial and error and the willingness of others to forgive us when we get things horribly wrong.

I wish I had been taught that

friendships are not always healthy, and that respectful disagreements can and should be part of a mutually respectful relationship.

I wish I had been told that confronting a problem needn't be a bad thing, and that advocating for oneself is not the same as being mean to others.

From Nursery through to Senior Studies, our students are taught about friendships and how to keep them in the healthy zone. We teach that most friendships will have their ups and downs and that's OK. We teach that every friendship is different, and that it is good to have different friends. We try to take away the unhelpful pressure to find a BFF.

We want every child to learn that trust, kindness and respect are the key ingredients for a healthy friendship. If spending time with a friend makes us feel good about ourselves, that's in the healthy zone. If we are left feeling sad, excluded or anxious, then this friendship needs





re-evaluating. Sometimes a friendship starts off well, but those key ingredients are missing. A friendship should make us feel happy, trusted and respected.

We teach these words and skills so that our students can explain how they are feeling about their friendships and recognise when something needs to change.

It's common for one friend to have no idea why their friend is upset with them. A friendship can't be repaired until we know what has caused the problem.

Peaceful Problem Solving and Friendship Fires

Within Primary, a typical upset between friends is called a Friendship Fire. Most can be put out using peaceful problem-solving conversations – often supported by the teacher.

As they get older, our students start to understand that there are different points of view, and to respond in a more thoughtful way. The aim of peaceful problem solving is to confront the issue honestly, and then to forgive and forget, leaving their friendship closer and stronger. We want our students to become conflict-resolvers, not conflict-avoiders.

Find a good time to talk and listen.

Using a calm, serious voice:

1. Retell the situation.
2. Explain how it made you feel.
3. Talk it through, being respectful and honest.

## Responding to mean-on-purpose behaviours

When children are 'mean-on-purpose', they are driven to cause hurt and distress, perhaps several times on purpose. This happens often within the child's friendship group. Mean-on-purpose behaviours require different responses in order to support all of the children involved and to bring about positive change. During the parent workshop in November I shared some of the strategies we use in school to support students and help them respond to these upsetting behaviours.

We want Bangkok Patana students to stand up for themselves without making the problem even bigger and possibly getting into trouble themselves. This is something that many of us would find challenging but, like any skill, the more you practice, the better you get.

Deploy a Quick Comeback!  
 'That's unkind. You need to stop.'  
 'It's not OK to talk to me like that.'  
 'Stop. I don't like it.'

'I've asked you not to call me that.'

Very few of us can come up with a quick and effective comeback when we most need one, so we teach children some key phrases and how to use them. Sticking up for yourself is not rude. In Foundation Stage many of our child use, 'Stop, I don't like it', but the best comeback is the one that gets used, even when your brain is flustered.

1. Say your Quick Comeback using a strong voice.
2. Then walk away. Don't get drawn in.
3. Report the behaviour to an adult.

We all have a role to play here. A child's readiness to side-step conflict is reinforced when we tell them to ignore the problem or try to solve the problem for them. Once they learn to put out their own Friendship Fires, or develop the confidence to use a Quick Comeback, managing upsets within friendships becomes part of their skill set. I wish I'd been taught that.

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# Penang's many world class medical services are ready to welcome more expats, both Asians and Westerners.

Facilitated by Penang Centre of Medical Tourism

By Joakim Persson

The Malaysian state and island Penang is an established travel destination and business centre. It is very successful as a manufacturing hub and home to many Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). Penang's attraction as a tourist destination is also well known because of its charming conservation of its historical old city centre, its beaches and its two UNESCO sites - with the historic Georgetown at its core!

Only recently has Penang been successful in positioning itself as a destination for medical tourism attracting many westerners living around Asia.

Prior to the Covid pandemic, Penang recorded nearly half a million medical tourists mostly from Indonesia. This sector has been bouncing back strongly. Penang Centre of Medical Tourism, PMed, the state body in charge of the promotion, talks to ScandAsia about this very encouraging development.

PMed's Advisor and State Minister for tourism, Mr YB Wong, informs ScandAsia that now more hotels are opening up than those that closed down during the pandemic and many hospitals are expanding.

"I think medical tourism is growing very strongly, and we have increasingly seen resumption of direct flights," says Mr YB Wong.

Health tourism and hospitality comes second only to the industrial sector in importance, informs the minister. He outlines the factors that make the conditions conducive to offering medical services for international visitors – including some obvious ones, such as the tropical weather. The currency situation has also made conditions favourable recently.

"It's actually an advantage because the other destinations and regions are expensive. People look around

for something more affordable. And, most importantly, our medical tourism doctors are trained in the Commonwealth Countries i.e. Malaysia, Singapore, the U.K, Australia, so they maintain high standards, along with well-trained supporting staff. This makes our medical care comparatively affordable, when benchmarking with other regions," says Mr Wong.

He also highlights the language proficiency, not least in English, paired with a high service level.

"All things combined give us a competitive edge in this region!"

One of PMED's member hospitals, Sunway Medical Centre Penang, agrees about the affordability.

"Our fees are actually regulated by our ministry and when we compare, I think the costs for Malaysian health-care is only a fraction of what it amounts to in many other countries," says Sunway's CEO, Stephanie Lee Wai Fern.

"Therefore, international visitors can enter Malaysia and finance other things like their hotel stay, shopping and holidays by saving on their medical costs."

An important factor is also accessibility: many cities and countries are within one to four hours flight distance from Penang.

"There are direct flights to reach here very conveniently and then you can do a medical check-up, consult your doctor, and also spend a few days here. Then you repeat that trip every year," says Mr Wong, informing that many patients come for repetitive consultations regarding common issues (hypertension, diabetes etc.).

Having built up such a strong customer base from Indonesia (Malay-speaking and at short travel distance), other nationalities in the region are now being targeted. For instance, direct flights from Xiamen connect Penang



“

*There are direct flights to reach here very conveniently and then you can do a medical check-up, consult your doctor, and also spend a few days here.*

”

to no less than 60 Chinese cities! And via Dubai and Qatar visitors from the west can also conveniently reach the island state.

Penang is also a renowned melting pot for cuisines and many come specifically for its famous hawker food, 'Nyonya' restaurants etc. The environment is also suited for rejuvenation and convalescence.

"Westerners want to explore the food of the orient, the beaches, nature and the Unesco sites. All things combined give Penang its special attraction," thinks YB Wong.

Health screening packages are popular, while Penang can offer a wide range of services, including surgical treatments, such as orthopaedics, cardiovascular and plastic and reconstructive restoration.

The Sunway hospital also points out that getting an appointment to see a specialist is very straightforward.

"Malaysia's healthcare allows patients to head straight into specialist care. That's another of the advantages also for medical tourists," says its CEO.

As a new private hospital based on the mainland, Sunway has clearly prepared itself to offer its services to customers coming from abroad. This often starts with a pre-arrival tele-consultation enabling the customer to find out in advance what their stay in Penang will be like.

"From when someone arrives to the point when a hip or knee replacement is done can be a matter of only two to three days, with post treatment recovery for another week or two, so literally we'll need less than two weeks before the patient can fly back home."



Stephanie Lee Wai Fern, CEO, Sunday Medical Centre Penang



YB. Wong, P.Med Advisor and State Minister for Tourism.





"Elective procedures are essential for the health tourism market, and where we don't have much queue. And with our line-up of our doctors we are actually very comprehensive," she adds.

"We are more than ready to serve the larger community as well as the international market."

Facilitating foreigners is partly enabled thanks to the relatively small local population, which in turn also benefits through economy at scale.

"The medical technology that we deploy for the locals can actually be further enhanced by the international market as well," says the CEO.

"We actually have ventured into robotic surgery and are also very focused on certain types of cancer treatment, which not only benefits locals but is also able to serve regional patients," she adds.

Sunway is an example of a player understanding medical tourism very well, in serving its customers with much more than treatments – as a one-stop shop. Next door it has a Sunway hotel and also a shopping mall is coming nearby, explains Stephanie.

"It's all part and parcel of the patient's journey" during convalescence.

"We do see that they need a lot more than medical treatment alone, so we are gradually building up our facilitation. PMed has also locked in and collaborates with many supporting services to promote Penang as a health travel destination."

Aside from transporting its customers to George-

town and the island for recreation Sunway also wants to promote what the surrounding mainland has to offer, including seafood dining, mountain scenery and trips to Ipoh.

"There are a lot of amenities and infrastructure on the island itself that also benefits expats to retire there. I'd say the mainland is still unexplored but we are hopeful that it can be developed further, to also drive and support the needs of international retirees in the future as the island gets increasingly saturated."

The ageing population in many countries is also in focus for Sunway in offering – among its comprehensive specialist services – what is typically needed more by retirees: geriatric healthcare.

"With more elderly people we'll see increased needs. Age is just a number but there may be an increase of health issues due to lifestyle habits. They will have more chronic diseases, so the patient itself will be more complex because of all these concurrent diseases," explains Sunway's Geriatrician, Dr. Low Chung Min.

"Our focus is always on their functionality, and bringing patients back to their previous level upon recovery. Following on that is the need to have rehabilitation services and even community care - with doctors, nurses, and therapists. They need a whole continuum of health care services from community care to acute services. Some may also need long term care because they are not able to take care of themselves at home. We need to aim for that as the world is aging."

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## Traditional Charm Meets Modern Comfort

The capital of Penang State is George Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Penang is multi faceted: an award winning, world renowned tourist destination, it is known as the Silicon Valley of the East where many multi-national corporations thrive in manufacturing and global business outsourcing.



Affordability -  
value for money



Direct flights -  
ease of connectivity



Internationally  
trained doctors



Short traveling times  
and distances within  
Penang



Ease of communication -  
everyone speaks at least  
two languages



Same day  
medical reports



Doctors resident  
in hospital



Modern, cutting edge  
equipment to facilitate  
swift healing



# Magnus Ramstad Dahl – about navigating business’ in Southeast Asia as the founder of NordCham Indonesia

ScandAsia met with Magnus Ramstad Dahl, the Norwegian founder of NordCham Indonesia, for a talk about the challenges and successes of establishing a Nordic Chamber of Commerce in Southeast Asia. The discussion covered the inception of the chamber, its purpose, and the unique dynamics of the business landscape in Indonesia.

*By Miabell Mallikka Smedegaard*



## Standing out from the crowd

When I first met Magnus, it was the evening before the interview, at the NordCham event discussing the 2024 Presidential Election outlook. His curly hair and big smile made him easily recognizable as he navigated through the crowd, carrying beers, ready to greet his members the Scandinavian way—by offering them a drink. Even though he doesn't consume alcohol himself.

The next morning, I met with him at the NordCham office within the shared workspace at WeWork Noble House in Jakarta. Upon my arrival, he was in the communal kitchen area, prepared to make me a coffee. However, he noticed that I had already grabbed one from the Starbucks downstairs.

"Can I offer you something cold to go with it?" he politely asked, and then had his intern, Sebastian, get me an ice water. All three of us then proceeded to the official NordCham office.

## The search for snus

In the small, minimally decorated office, Magnus began by arranging his numerous snus boxes in front of him at his desk.

"I've been trying to get in touch with the guy who makes this. It's called Tigersnus and is produced in Bali. I believe he's Finnish. There are plenty of rumors about him, mostly suggesting that he started Tigersnus because he uses snus himself but couldn't find it in Bali. So, he initiated his own snus company as a sort of pet project, or something like that. That's my hypothesis. I really want to visit the factory because I'm eager to learn everything there is to know about Tigersnus," Magnus shared with obvious enthusiasm.

## How it all started

Magnus' own journey to Indonesia, began with an exchange semester in Singapore. After the exchange program, he sought opportunities to return to Southeast Asia and found a project in Jakarta, where he eventually relocated for work.

His involvement in the business community, particularly the founding of the Nordic Chamber of Commerce in Indonesia, traces back to his involvement in organizing the annual Norwegian Seafood Extravaganzas in various Southeast Asian markets. The establishment of a Nordic Chamber in the Philippines sparked the idea of a shared Nordic chamber in Indonesia, leading to the launch of NordCham in September 2019.

"I realized that if you have a market that's a little bit

smaller in terms of the number of Nordic companies, it really makes sense to aggregate it into one Nordic Chamber. It's about joining forces, building a united community, and contributing something meaningful to the world."

## Challenged by Covid

However, the unfortunate timing, just five months before the global pandemic, posed significant challenges to the chamber's initial momentum.

The pandemic's onset brought about a decline in traditional chamber activities heavily reliant on face-to-face interactions. The shift to online events, while necessary, faced challenges due to the overload of virtual content. Despite this setback, Magnus persisted, adapting to the circumstances by using online platforms to maintain engagement within the Nordic business community.

"We were in the phase of trying to build a community. I did everything I could, such as transitioning to online events. However, everyone else were also hosting online events simultaneously. The excess of virtual gatherings, including numerous Zoom calls and webinars, led to people quickly becoming fatigued."

## Relocating to Bali

In the face of the pandemic challenges, Magnus sought refuge in Bali. Faced with a virtual business landscape, he embraced the serenity of the island, trading Jakarta's chaos for personal solace.





*I see immense growth potential  
for Nordic companies in Indonesia.  
The vibrant economy, coupled with our strategic  
community-building efforts, creates fertile  
ground for business expansion.*



“It was amazing to live in Bali, especially at that time due to the lack of tourists. As a Nordic, I had the island to myself with a few other foreigners. Everything was on sale – rentals, properties. I had a house, a pool and my own garden. It was great for me personally, but not ideal for NordCham. After a while, I felt detached from NordCham and what was happening in Jakarta, since being in Bali feels like being in a different country.”

Despite the personal rejuvenation, Magnus emphasizes the challenges of maintaining professional ties. As society started to open up, Magnus therefor returned to Jakarta, recognizing the necessity of physical presence in community building and business networking for the chamber's growth.

## All about Nordic community building

Discussing the chamber's strategic focus, Magnus emphasizes the significance of Indonesia as a market. With an estimated 250 Nordic companies in the country, NordCham aims to unite them under one platform.

“I would say that NordCham is distinct in its focus. While many chambers emphasize social networking, we are more business-oriented. Our strength lies in providing access to market intelligence, delivering impactful events and fostering a community centered around information sharing. We carve our niche by addressing the specific needs of our members, creating a dynamic space for collaboration and growth.”

While community building remains a priority, Magnus outline his plans for advocacy and engagement with the Indonesian government. The chamber aims to present

a united front, advocating for changes that could improve the investment climate and attract more Nordic businesses to Indonesia. Another reason he found it necessary to unite the Nordic countries under one chamber instead of working dividedly under several smaller chambers, as was previously the case.

## Great Nordic potential

As Magnus shared his insights on the challenges faced by Nordic companies in Indonesia and the need for a united approach, he expressed optimism about the potential and the positive reputation Nordic countries hold in the eyes of the Indonesian government.

“I see immense growth potential for Nordic companies in Indonesia. The vibrant economy, coupled with our strategic community-building efforts, creates fertile ground for business expansion. Indonesia is not just a market; it's an opportunity. Together, we are in a great position to unlock untapped potential, fostering a dynamic environment where Nordic companies can thrive and make a lasting impact,” Magnus shares.

“Indonesia looks up to the Nordic countries as beacons of sustainable development, innovation, and social progress. The Nordic model of governance is renowned for its inclusivity, environmental focus and economic success. The Nordic countries serves as an inspiration for Indonesia's aspirations. The strong reputation and values upheld by the Nordic nations make them a reference point for Indonesia's pursuit of a progressive and balanced future,” he continues with a clear passion for the project.





## The man behind the chamber

In the midst of our discussion about business, community building and the challenges of navigating Jakarta, Magnus opens up about his unique lifestyle and personal habits. Living in the bustling city, Magnus highlighted the importance of having a peaceful oasis, such as his well-loved apartment. His personal sanctuary where he gets to recharge from the stress of Jakarta – a city starkly different from the tranquility of the Nordics.

To escape the urban chaos, Magnus frequently travels to Bali. He indulges in sports like badminton and embraces the invigorating combination of ice plunges and saunas, leading to the mention of an infamous sauna club.

“The ‘sauna club’ is more innocent than it sounds. It’s just a group of people enjoying the warmth and camaraderie. Though in some Nordic countries, ‘sauna club’ might have a different subtext. Here, it’s just a Finnish-dominated haven for relaxation and community building,” Magnus explains with a grin.

## Eating nothing but meat

However, the conversation took an unexpected turn when Magnus shared his experience with the carnivore diet. A lifestyle choice that involves consuming only animal products.

“I’ve embraced the carnivore diet as more than just a culinary choice. It’s a lifestyle that resonates with me. Savoring the simplicity of animal-based nourishment aligns with my commitment to holistic well-being. It’s not just about what’s on the plate; it’s about feeling energized, focused and in tune with my body’s needs. Following the carnivore diet, I’ve never felt better. It has become

a cornerstone in my pursuit of a balanced and health-conscious life,” he shares while exhibiting true dedication.

Exploring this diet for almost two years, Magnus speaks passionately about the mental clarity, increased energy and the overall well-being he has experienced. The carnivore diet, which eliminates plant-based foods, has become a key part of his biohacking journey. Despite acknowledging that some might find his dietary choices unconventional, Magnus emphasized the positive impact it has had on his life.

## What the future holds

As NordCham Indonesia continues its journey, Magnus remains focused on providing real value to its members. His focus is on fostering a strong community and actively contributing to the dialogue between Nordic businesses and the Indonesian government. The chamber’s resilience during the pandemic and its adaptability underlines its commitment to supporting Nordic companies in South-east Asia.

“As I gaze into the future, I see endless possibilities for NordCham and the Nordic community in Indonesia. Our journey has just begun. With each step, we’re shaping a vibrant and dynamic future. Together, we’ll continue to foster growth, build meaningful connections, and hopefully create a lasting impact. The road ahead is filled with opportunities, and I am excited to witness the unfolding chapters of our collective success,” Magnus shares with excitement about what awaits ahead for NordCham Indonesia.

PS: After the meeting Magnus finally managed to meet Kimmo, the Bali based Finnish founder of Tigersnus.



# Minh Graphic: Vietnamese-Danish Graphic Design Company is bridging cultures through their design

By Miabell Mallikka Smedegaard

In 2005, the story of Minh Graphic began as An Phu Design, a Vietnamese-founded company with a vision for creative communication. Over the years, Minh Graphic has undergone a significant transformation, welcoming new Danish partners and evolving its focus. Today, Minh Graphic stands as a dynamic player in the graphic design industry. Seamlessly blending Vietnamese and Danish influences.

ScandAsia met with the company's Managing Director, Thuy Nguyen, at their office in District 4, Ho Chi Minh City, for an insightful conversation on the company's transformation.

## The intersection of cultures

An Phu Design was initially a collaboration between The Vietnamese packaging company, Liksin and Buchs, a Danish communication agency, along with IFU, a Danish fund company. A cooperation that marked the fusion of Vietnamese and Danish influences. Despite having a Vietnamese founder, Danish companies played an essential role from the start. The multicultural team flourished, with a mix of Vietnamese, Danish, and today some Finnish talent.

Thuy Nguyen has been associated with the company since its inception in 2005. She took a brief break during a two-year period, during which she worked for one of the three Danish-owned graphic companies in the city.



“I like the culture that the Scandinavian touch brings to the work environment. I have always enjoyed my work at Minh Graphic, which is one of the reasons why I came back here. Another reason why I like working for Danish owned companies is, that my husband is Vietnamese-Danish. He was born in Denmark. Working for a Danish company, and navigating the cultural nuances associated with it brings me closer to my husband's culture,” Thuy shares.

## Relocation and restructuring

In 2010, Minh Graphic experienced a significant shift in ownership. The Vietnamese company, Liksin, withdrew as a partner, while Envision, another Danish communication agency, stepped in. The company continued to thrive, adapting to changes and relocating from Binh Thanh District to District 4, for enhanced accessibility and expanded operations. The commitment to quality and growth remained unwavering until the departure of IFU in 2013. Still, the company continued to evolve, moving its office to their current location in Dinh Le Tower in 2015, while Thuy Nguyen stepped in as Managing Director of Minh Graphic in 2018.

“As the Managing Director at Minh Graphic, I consider my Vietnamese background to be a significant strength. I understand the concerns of my colleagues, which allows me to comprehend and address them effectively. Thereby contributing to their satisfaction and happiness in the workplace. My primary focus is on people, recognizing that content and fulfilled employees contribute to the satisfaction of our clients,” Thuy shares with a sincere smile.

The company's leadership also witnessed shifts, within the board with Danish figures playing pivotal roles. Annie Sørensen, former CFO at Envision, took on the role of Chairman in 2011, and thereby broadened the Danish influence. The Chairman position is today occupied by another Danish professional, Chris Taastrup Mikkelsen, who is the Head of Prepress and Production at Envision.



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*I like the culture that the Scandinavian touch brings to the work environment.*

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Still, the commitment to maintaining Danish standards and quality persist – emphasizing Minh Graphic's dedication to its Scandinavian roots.

## The Danish design influences

Under Danish ownership, Minh Graphic has not only embraced the Scandinavian work culture but also the Danish design ethos. With an eye for minimalist and functional design, the company is behind well-known graphic for big Danish companies like Føtex, Bilka and Egmont.

“Danish graphic design leans are often more aligned and less colorful, while Vietnamese design traditionally embraced vibrant colors. However, there's a noticeable shift in Vietnam towards a more international, subdued style, adapting to Western influences. You can see that in street advertisements. But still not at the same level as Scandinavian companies. Danish companies generally avoid bright colors, except in kid-focused media,” Thuy shares after many years of experience, doing graphic design for Danish clients.



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*As the Managing Director at Minh Graphic, I consider my Vietnamese background to be a significant strength.*

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The Danish-inspired principles of simplicity and innovation has thereby become a fundamental part of Minh Graphic's design philosophy.

### Adapting to rising challenges

Navigating through cultural design differences is not the only challenge Minh Graphic is facing. With shifts in the industry, particularly the move from print to digital the company constantly has to adapt to keep up. With a dedicated team and a focus on AI and online platforms, the company is constantly working on positioning itself as a forward-thinking player in the ever-evolving design landscape.

"In Danish magazines, there's a shift towards reducing paper, and a focus on online platforms. The integration of AI technologies is on the rise, enhancing efficiency. Our employees are becoming increasingly aware of these changes. Previously, we lacked capabilities in banner production and animation. However, in the past two to three years, we invested in training our team, and now we have a skilled and robust team for such tasks. We are committed to keeping pace with technological advancements, learning more, and adapting to the growing online landscape," Thuy reassures.

As Minh Graphic embraced technological shifts, the influence of Danish design principles still remains at the forefront. The company's foray into AI, online platforms, and digital design is showcasing its agility in aligning with global trends while preserving the minimalist elegance synonymous with Danish design.







## A flexible and inclusive workplace

The company's two-shift system, designed to align with both Vietnamese and Danish working hours, reflects Minh Graphic's commitment to a Danish-inspired workplace culture – showing the place's commitment towards being a flexible and inclusive working place for their employees. The offices open communication culture along with flexible working hours, and a friendly environment mirrors the Danish culture and creates a blend of Vietnamese and Danish influences.

"Since I have never worked in a Scandinavian country, I can't draw exact comparisons with Vietnamese companies. But in a Vietnamese-owned company, hierarchy and approval processes are prevalent. Accessing the managing director at my previous workplace involved navigating through multiple steps. In contrast, the environment here is characterized by openness and friendliness. As the managing director, I am easily accessible, fostering a more direct and approachable culture. This aligns with a more open office culture," Thuy says.

"I also actively seek employee feedback through annual surveys, aiming to create an optimal working environment based on their preferences. Involving employees in decision-making is definitely a practice inspired by the Scandinavian approach," she adds.

## Dedicated to talent and education

Minh Graphic not only prioritizes its clients but also invests in the development of its employees. Thuy emphasizes the collaborative effort with the education ministry in Denmark, supporting vocational schools in Vietnam. This cooperative effort ensures that Vietnamese designers receive training aligned with Danish standards. Thereby fostering a new generation of talent in Vietnam to overtake the outsourced Danish graphic work in the future.

"We get to host Vietnamese interns in our program in collaboration with the Danish Ministry of Children and Education, along with the Vocational Education Program sponsored by the Danish Embassy in Hanoi and the Vietnamese government." "It's hard getting an internship here in Vietnam, so we appreciate the help to develop future graphic designers here at Minh Graphic," Thuy explains.

Minh Graphic reflects a harmonious blend of Vietnamese and Danish culture. As the company behind the graphic design of several recognizable Scandinavian brands, Minh Graphic stands as a cultural fusion, where the minimalistic of Danish design meets the vibrant colors of Vietnam.

# Meet the Danish duo that brought Copenhagen to Bali

Seven years ago, Nadia Sara Boan Sørensen and Jeppe Bech-Sørensen embarked on a culinary journey in Southeast Asia.

The couple's story began with a chance meeting in Spain that blossomed into the realization of a shared dream – to move to Asia and establish something together. Little did they know that this dream would evolve, taking them on a path of unexpected challenges and gastronomic success.

By Miabell Mallikka Smedegaard



## Discovering Bali

The couple's story unfolds against the backdrop of their initial encounter in Spain's Costa del Sol. Nadia, driven by a passion for cooking, shared her dream of relocating to Asia with Jeppe. The dream was rooted in memories of her backpacking adventures in her twenties, exploring the beauty and warmth of Asia. What started as Nadia's dream soon became a shared vision, leading them to make the life-altering decision to move.

"Before we left, we embarked on a 3-month journey to explore potential locations. We went to the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand. The allure of Bali ultimately captivated us. Its rich culture and the warmth of its locals. The Balinese people just radiate sweetness and authenticity. We found a connection with the tourists as well," Nadia shares.

"We saw Bali as the next Thailand. While it may not have surpassed Thailand, Bali has proven to be more popular than we initially anticipated," she adds, while Jeppe agrees.

## Not an easy transfer

Reflecting on the journey, Nadia acknowledges the initial difficulty of the transition.

"It was incredibly challenging. I was really upset the first six months. The notion of pursuing a dream can be

romanticized, and when you actually embark on it, the experience becomes incredibly intense. There wasn't much of a safety net for me; all my funds were in my account. Having never lived outside of Denmark, the cultural transition was immense," Nadia says.

Before embarking on the journey, they had both sold all of their belongings back home, leaving them nothing to return to, should the dream fail. Jeppe, with his previous experience of living abroad, managed to keep a level head, but even he couldn't escape the challenges that came with starting over in a new region, that was so culturally different from their life back in Europe.

"But we were all in. We had 60 kilos with us when we came and we have never brought more down here," the couple added.

## Dreams may change

The couple's dream initially revolved around the idea of creating a tranquil beachside boutique hotel. Nadia and Jeppe envisioned a haven where travelers could escape the hustle and bustle, indulging in a unique blend of Scandinavian hospitality and tropical serenity. However, as dreams often collide with the reality of financial constraints, the original plan proved too expensive to materialize.





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*It has become a place where you might encounter fellow Danes. We've overheard people discussing it several times.*

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“The thought was to embrace a simple life on the beach, managing a boutique hotel with just a few rooms and a small café,” Jeppe shares.

“My interest in cooking fueled this dream. While I lack professional training in culinary arts, my enthusiasm for food have always been obvious. The hotel aspect was more of an additional dimension. So, when it didn’t happen, it was natural for us to look into starting a café instead,” Nadia elaborates.

## Bringing Copenhagen to Canggu

This led to the Opening of the first Copenhagen café in Canggu. A concept that over time has led to no less than three locations – all situated in Canggu, Bali.

All three establishment deliberately exudes a Copenhagen Meatpacking District vibe – a blend of clinical minimalism with raw industrial elements.

“At first we thought of Nyhavn, since that is the area most people think about when you say Copenhagen. But I believe that the Meatpacking District in Copenhagen represents the new Copenhagen, whereas Nyhavn is more of the old Copenhagen,” Nadia says.

This aesthetic choice, coupled with a menu boasting modern twists on traditional Danish food, has attracted a diverse crowd - particularly Scandinavians seeking a taste of home.

## Building a brand despite pandemic struggles

The pandemic disrupted their plans to open a new venue in 2020, but they weathered the storm. As soon as society reopened, they experienced a surge in business, with long queues forming outside the Copenhagen flagship.

“Overnight we were just swamped again. We became incredibly busy, particularly at the first café. There were long lines extending far out onto the street, with 20-30 people almost always waiting. Copenhagen has established itself as a brand, and that’s why people are willing to queue there,” the couple share with pride.

Their commitment to quality and scratch-made offerings has created a hype around Copenhagen in Bali.

“Our quality is really good. We go to great lengths to make things properly from scratch,” Nadia emphasize.

Social media has played an essential role, spreading the word and attracting both tourists and expats. Making Copenhagen a hub for the Nordic community.

“Since we first opened, it’s been a very organic growth,” Jeppe adds.

In the initial months after opening, achieving five customers in a day felt like a significant accomplishment. Today, the first cafe alone sees around 400 customers daily. With additional locations, the total of daily guests reaches close to 1,000 people - marking a remarkable journey from those early days of celebrating a handful of customers.





## The place to meet fellow Danes

"It has become a place where you might encounter fellow Danes. We've overheard people discussing it several times," notes Nadia.

Though 90 percent of Copenhagen's clientele are tourists, primarily Europeans, the majority are not Nordic. Nevertheless, a noteworthy trend is emerging, drawing people from Nordic countries to the place.

"We have numerous regulars who reside here, most of them being expats. Balinese people aren't typically enthusiastic about Danish cuisine, with the exception of a cinnamon bun," Nadia shares with a smile.

"A funny story," Nadia then adds, and pause.

"We often get these Danes, usually guys, who come here in groups, all wearing football jerseys. They come here specifically to get Rye bread (aka. smørrebrød)." The duo nods and laughs.

"Seriously, it's a regular thing. Our crowd is mostly young people, perhaps on their first trip, feeling a bit homesick. They often either wear a football jersey, or they have one stashed in their bag – just in case," Nadia adds with a sentimental smile.

## Looking towards the future

As they plan for the future, Jeppe and Nadia only see themselves living in Bali full-time for another 3-4 years. While Bali has been a beautiful chapter, they feel that

the full-time Bali lifestyle has an expiration date. Still, they imagine spending 2-3 months a year in Bali going forward.

Even though the two are contemplating exploring new horizons, they still envision opening more places in Bali - potentially Uluwatu or Seminyak. The duo is even considering Jakarta or Singapore for a future Copenhagen concept cafe.

"The next step would be to open more places. We want it to become a kind of franchise where we don't have to be present anymore," Nadia says.

"We know what the brand can do, and that's why we're not done. We haven't reached where we want to be," she adds.

Furthermore, Nadia mentions the brand's continuous evolution, citing the new collaboration with a Danish baker to upgrade their pastries. The duo also aims to go beyond the café experience - exploring merchandise and other avenues to expand the Copenhagen brand.

The Danish couple has made Copenhagen Bali into much more than just a café. It's a product of dreams, resilience and the fusion of two worlds: Copenhagen and Bali.



# ‘The Pink School’ in Pattaya

It matters to The Pink School in Pattaya when the Danish Church Thailand contributes with clothes and 11 kg of Lego bricks. And it matters when the Church Council physically shows up and bakes Danish waffles for the school’s children.

*By Sofie Rønnelund*

ScandAsia followed along when the Danish Church in Thailand visited Human Help Network Foundation Thailand (HHNFT) at its Learning Center / Asean Education Center (AEC) for migrant children in Pattaya on 8 November, 2023.

The church had been in contact with LEGO, which had agreed to donate toys to the school. With 11 kg of LEGO bricks, as well as clothes, games and homemade waffles, the Church Council set off for Pattaya. Here they were greeted by about a hundred children in their recognizable pink uniforms, who broke into Christmas carols that were clearly well rehearsed, and by a warm staff who welcomed the guests with handmade gifts.

And there’s a very special reason for the pink uniforms.

## Pink is a memorable color

HHNFT created a safe shelter in 2014 to house the children of migrant workers who needed a place to stay during the day while their parents were at work. Because unfortunately, there are serious risks when children are



left at home – such as kidnapping, abuse and in the worst cases murder, Deputy Director Siromes Akrapongpanich told ScandAsia.

People have previously criticized and questioned why the school has not chosen to prioritize vulnerable Thai children versus migrant children from Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar to name a few. But Siromes explained that this mindset is the mentality of many, and therefore migrant children are often forgotten – and are thus the most vulnerable group.

So HHNFT simply wanted to be the place to take care of this minority. And this brings us to the eye-catching pink color scheme. The bright pink color is meant to remind the children of the school, and thereby serve as a 'good memory' in the midst of a perhaps otherwise turbulent childhood.

### Lunchtime: Like a family gathering

At school, the children receive a large, free lunch every day. And if there are leftovers, it is sent home with the kids in a lunch box. It's worth noting that for some children, the meal is the only one they get during the day. The oldest kids help out the youngest ones during lunch with bringing the food to the table. It feels very much like watching a family cooperating with one another in a home.

The kids sit patiently and wait until everybody is ready and placed by a table. Then teachers and kids say a prayer, and lunchtime kickstarts. Children are allowed to eat as much as they please, and when they finish, they get up to play – giving space and time for those who wish to sit for a little longer and eat.

There is simply enough time.



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*We might not be able to give them a full education. But at least we've given them a safe place to stay for two months.*

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### A shelter and a stepping stone

In 2016, it was decided that the site would expand into a school, so the board established a curriculum. One of the first things children learn when they arrive is how to differentiate between good and bad people, hygiene and the difference between safe vs. harmful touches. After their safety has been given value, the children are taught general, theoretical education.





And the result is good. Children who have previously set foot in the school are now doing internships at well-known organizations and have jobs. They now function as role models at the school's Hall of Fame, to ensure the kids that good opportunities are ahead of them.

During one of today's classes, kids were drawing Christmas cards. Photo: Sofie Rønne Lund

In fact, 9 children will receive the school's first legitimate diplomas in March 2024. Diplomas, that are recognized by Thai authorities and have even earned praise for the children's achievements.

"They thought we were an international school at first. When we told them that we are a safe shelter for vulnerable migrant children, they were particularly impressed. But there is nothing to brag about. This place is a necessity," Siromes said.

One might question what good it is, if a child can

only stay temporarily due to family moving for work. But to the Deputy Director it is very clear:

"We might not be able to give them a full education. But at least we've given them a safe place to stay for two months."

### Everything you see is donations

Since its inception, the entire school has been created entirely on the basis of donations and sponsorships. The biggest partners are German companies such as Lufthansa, who in fact visited the school right after the church.

"Everything you see right now has come from donations. Our volunteers, the building, the uniforms, the chairs. Everything."

Siromes then explained how the school values sustainability, which is why they make sure to always document its development, so sponsors can see that their donations do make a difference.

Because donations matter. Big or small. They are the ones that shape the school and give something to the children's daily schooling.

That's why it matters to the school when the Danish church contributes with clothes and 11 kg of Lego bricks. And that's why it matters when the Church Council physically shows up and bakes Danish waffles for the school's children.

Because it's initiatives like these that keep the school running and allow the children to thrive. And for them to experience that they are not forgotten.



# Scandinavian Christ Service in Bangkok



The Christ Service in Bangkok took place on 23rd of December in Christ Church on Convent Road in Bangkok. The Danish, Swedish and Norwegian Churches in Thailand read together the Gospel and sang some of the most popular Nordic Christmas carols.

After the Service, Thai Nordic Association was hosting a Christmas Cheers with classic "aebleskiver" in the hall next to the church.

Around 100 Nordic expats joined the event and wished each other a blessed Christmas.







## Photo exhibition by former Finnish journalist displayed in Bangkok

A photo exhibition, titled “All Over the World with Rauli Virtanen,” by former journalist and foreign correspondent Rauli Virtanen, is currently showcased at the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Thailand (FCCT) in Bangkok.

The exhibition’s opening night took place at the FCCT, where the Ambassador of Finland, H.E. Jyri Järviäho, along with Panu Wongcha-um,

Senior Correspondent for Reuters Bangkok and Past President at The Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Thailand, had the pleasure of meeting Virtanen himself during the event.

As reported by the Embassy of Finland in Bangkok, the showcased photos in the exhibition are also featured in Virtanen’s new book, titled “Rauli Virtanen Here: Encounters from Vietnam to Ukraine.”

The exhibition, “All Over the World with Rauli Virtanen,” will remain on display at FCCT until January 14, 2024.



# New sustainable neo-plane flying from Denmark to Thailand

Sunclass Airlines has inaugurated a new, eco-friendly plane that transported 373 Spies guests from Copenhagen to Thailand. The plane will continue to fly to Phuket throughout the winter.

The aircraft, referred to as a 'neo-plane,' not only prioritizes passenger comfort through innovative seating and improved sound isolation but also boasts an impressive 23% reduction in CO2 emissions per passenger kilometer compared to its predecessor.

This is the second neo-plane of all Sunclass Airlines' planes, and they expect to be fully equipped with them by the end of 2030.

"We have a goal to reduce the carbon footprint by 25 percent by the end of 2030 and to reach zero emissions by 2050. Aircraft fleet re-



placement is very central in that plan," said CEO, Valdemar Warburg.

"It is very gratifying that we can conclude 2023 with three neo

aircraft in the fleet. The entire replacement process appears to be progressing faster than anticipated," Warburg added.

# Nordic Formula expanding to Southeast Asia



Swedish-Norwegian entrepreneur Linda Jørgensen, owner of the beauty brand Nordic Formula, is expanding her products into the global market with a specific focus on the Asia-Pacific region - particularly Singapore. In a recent interview with Expat Living, Linda, who was born in Sweden but has resided in Norway for over 30 years and is now a Norwegian citizen, shared her deep connection to Singapore.

Established in the city-state with her Norwegian husband, who proposed to her in Singapore, and their two daughters, Linda expressed her fondness for the country. She em-

phasized the genuine open-mindedness and willingness of the locals to share and support each other, making Singapore an easy-going and enjoyable place for both living and working. Linda makes regular trips to Singapore every three months to promote her beauty brand.

Trained as a certified skin therapist and aromatherapist, Linda's mission is to guide individuals toward achieving healthy skin and developing formulas to prevent and repair sun damage. In 2024, she envisions expanding her presence in the professional market in Singapore and Malaysia.



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A man in a white t-shirt and dark shorts is jumping high in the air, reaching up with his right hand to catch a frisbee. The background shows a grassy field with a chain-link fence and stadium lights. A large, glowing yellow outline of the ISB triangle is superimposed over the scene, framing the man and the frisbee.

# uniquelyISB

#4. ISB's Open Campus ethos welcomes the whole family to enjoy the facilities, host events and even play the odd game of Ultimate Frizbee with teachers. #uniquelyISB



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