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Faculty of Arts  
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FASS Reading Group on  
"the Politics of Enablement"

Department of Political Science, NUS

# "MONNIKENHEIDE: SOCIAL INCLUSION IN BELGIUM

*The seminar brings together scholars across several faculties and policy makers in Singapore to think about the politics, economics and social dimensions of better integrating and empowering the 'disabled' in society.*

## ABSTRACT:

Since its foundation in 1973, Monnikenheide has lived by its mission of providing professional services to the mentally disabled in a warm 'family setting', and become one of the most sought-after facilities in Belgium for families with children and members with special needs. Monnikenheide was born out of Wivina Demeester's desire to change the way society treated mentally disabled people. Monnikenheide moved away from the medical/psychiatric model of "care" for the mentally disabled, towards a model of normalization and integration for these members of society.

In this talk, Ms. Wivina Demeester will be speaking of her experiences in setting up Monnikenheide, adapting Scandinavian models, her efforts to promote employment and independent living for persons with mental disabilities, and partnerships with centres in China, India and other countries to internationalize the model of normalization and integration for the mentally disabled.

**Tuesday, 9 April 2013, at 16.30-18.00**

**Venue: FASS Research Division Seminar Room, AS7-06-42,  
The Shaw Foundation Building, NUS Kent Ridge Campus  
Singapore (117570)**

Please RSVP to [fass\\_ssp@nus.edu.sg](mailto:fass_ssp@nus.edu.sg)

*The founder of Monnikenheide, Ms Wivina Demeester, will speak about her centre.*

*What can we learn from Monnikenheide to empower/enable persons with physical and mental challenges to lead more independent and meaningful lives?*



Ms. Wivina Demeester is currently a member of the Zoersel City Council. She has served in various capacities on behalf of the national and Flemish governments in Belgium, and she has been a firm advocate of the arts, in addition to social issues for the disabled and the elderly.