Dear alumni,

There is strength in numbers and power in collaboration. In recent years, the partnership between INSEAD and the INSEAD Alumni Association (IAA) has had a significant impact on our community and our school. Today, our global network is stronger, our alumni are more engaged, and our school is better equipped to advance our mission and vision.

The INSEAD Alumni Recognition Awards are one of the outcomes of this partnership. INSEAD and the IAA created the Force for Good Award, Global Entrepreneurship Award, Emerging Entrepreneur Award and Volunteer Leader Award to recognise outstanding leaders who exemplify the values that INSEAD stands for. It is a privilege to honour these exceptional leaders and the good work they are doing in their communities and organisations.

Beyond these awards, INSEAD and the IAA continue to develop new initiatives, programmes and events that benefit all alumni. From creating lifelong learning opportunities to organising world-class reunions to hosting global alumni forums, we are committed to helping you stay connected to INSEAD — and giving you the tools to make the world a better place.

Kind regards,

Ilian Mihov
Dean, INSEAD

Sadia Khan, MBA’95D
President, INSEAD Alumni Association
Marcelle Speller
MBA'82
Founder and CEO of Localgiving
INSEAD Alumni Force for Good Award
“I didn’t want to just write checks; I wanted to be involved in building things, doing things and leveraging my money.”

Background and Key Accomplishments

- Earned a BS in Environmental Sciences from the University of East Anglia and an MBA from INSEAD
- Spent a decade honing her skills at top advertising agencies in London and Amsterdam
- Held senior marketing positions at a number of global companies, including InterContinental Hotels Group, American Express, Avis and AirUK
- Co-founded Holiday-Rentals.com in 1996, Europe’s leading website for advertising private holiday homes. Sold in 2005 to HomeAway Inc., part of Expedia Group
- Founded Localgiving in 2008, which became the UK’s leading online platform for small local charities and community groups, raising more than £15 million for 5,000 organisations
- Awarded an OBE in 2011 for her services to the voluntary sector
- Received a Beacon Fellowship for Pioneering Philanthropy and named Philanthropist of the Year at Spear’s Wealth Management Awards
- Awarded an honorary PhD from the University of East Anglia
- Served on IAA UK and IAA Executive Committee boards
- Lives in the United Kingdom
Marcelle Speller’s mother always went out of her way to help others. Her mother endured the war in occupied Holland and only moved to England in 1946 to marry her father whom she had met during the Battle of Arnhem. “She instilled this theory in me that if you’ve been given a lot, which I feel I was, then it’s your duty to use it,” shares Speller. “Not to just consume it, but to use it for good. That’s something that’s very deeply rooted in me.”

It’s a philosophy Speller put into action nearly a decade ago by launching Localgiving.org, the UK’s leading web platform for small local charities and community groups. After selling Holiday-Rentals.com, the successful private holiday home advertising website she launched with her husband, Speller found herself with time and money that she wanted to share.

“I wanted to use my three Ts: time, talent and treasure,” she remembers. “I didn’t want to just write checks; I wanted to be involved in building things, doing things and leveraging my money.”

After volunteering with a few charities, Speller attended a workshop at the Institute for Philanthropy that she heard about while attending an INSEAD UK Alumni Social Responsibility Group meeting. During the workshop, she realised she could use her experience with Holiday-Rentals.com to help local charities raise money and find volunteers.

The idea for Holiday-Rentals.com came to Speller and her husband when they had trouble finding renters for a flat they owned in Ireland. She realised that the concept of connecting holiday renters with property owners is actually very similar to connecting donors and volunteers with organisations seeking help and support.

“I was inspired by all the small, local charities that are there on the ground,” she explains. “They’re not just coming in, making promises and going away. They’re accountable, and they can really make things happen locally.”

The timing of this insight couldn’t have been better. Speller launched Localgiving.org in 2008, when the financial crisis hit and funding for charities began to shrink. Most online donations at the time were only set up for registered charities, which required a £5,000 registration fee that many small groups couldn’t afford. Nor did they know how to market themselves, something that Speller excelled in throughout her advertising and marketing career prior to Holiday-Rentals.com.

Combining her business experience with her knowledge of the online space was the perfect formula for launching a successful local charity platform. She describes it as “a lovely coming together” of multiple aspects of her life.

“The thing that makes me proud is that I leveraged what I gave,” she says. “The donations raised for Localgiving.org were more than five times the investment that I put in, plus the value of the volunteers, which you can’t actually measure. I could have just written a check, but because I used my business skills, I’ve leveraged up.”

Speller believes that using business to solve the greatest problems in the world by partnering with NGOs and governments is the surest way to create change. She credits her INSEAD experience with giving her the confidence and the skills to make Localgiving.org successful. “You have to make sure that you’ve got all of the elements of a business in there, from finances to marketing,” she says. “I couldn’t have done it without my business experience.”

Localgiving.org has raised over £20 million and counting. Other benefits are digital training and capacity building and raising awareness of local charities. As Speller steps back from her role at the Localgiving.org Foundation to consider her next endeavour, she’s taking some time to relish its success.

“Visiting the charities and seeing how we’ve kept them going and what they’ve done for their beneficiaries is incredibly fulfilling,” she says. “These are people who dedicate their lives to helping their communities. It’s very humbling, and I’d like to be a constant source of help to them.”
Denis von der Weid
MBA’61
Founder and Director of Antenna Foundation
INSEAD Alumni Force for Good Award
“We are not pretending to change the world, but let’s do what is within our reach.”

Background and Key Accomplishments

• Studied science and law, earning a Law Doctorate from the University of Fribourg and an MBA from INSEAD
• Focused on issues of poverty and hunger while a professor at National University of Colombia in Bogota
• Taught development economics at the University of Fribourg
• Lectured at INSEAD
• Worked four years in India with a leprosy programme studying parasite transmission
• Served as a director at pharmaceutical company Sandoz, which later became Novartis International
• Set up Antenna in 1984 as a supplier of clandestine radio transmitters to assist human rights activists in a number of countries
• Expanded the organisation into Antenna Technologies in 1989, a foundation using scientific, technological, health and economic solutions to meet basic needs in developing countries
• Helped create the social enterprise Eléphant Vert, focused on sustainable and ecological agricultural improvements
• Lives in Geneva, Switzerland
Denis von der Weid has been concerned about fighting poverty since he was 16 years old. "I thought this cannot be — that part of the world has all what they need, and the other part is living with hunger," he remembers. "The question of hunger was in my thoughts and formed my commitment."

At a young age, he began searching for ways to remedy the inequalities of the world, studying science as a means of developing solutions to nutrition and health problems and the law as a tool for creating equity in society. "When you are young and interested in creating a better world, you understand how to use the law and hope for justice," he shares.

Von der Weid quickly saw the link between the economics of poverty and business development and decided to add an MBA from INSEAD to his knowledge base. "Having a larger view on the economy and business is necessary for each lawyer," he says. "Law without economy is insufficient; economy without law doesn't work."

It was after INSEAD, while working as a professor at the National University of Colombia in Bogota, that he discovered the importance of living with the people you want to help and listening to their needs. "I began to understand how it works and what we can do to reduce poverty," he remembers. "I discovered if you are not living with the people, then your knowledge is only cursory."

He applied the same approach while working in India with a research programme helping Leprosy patients. He saw how technology could improve the daily lives of those living in extreme poverty, and how businesses ignored those living at the base of the economic pyramid.

"Companies should study solutions for using their products with the poorest," he says. "By excluding half of the world's population, they're practicing bad marketing. You can do very good business with the poorest—to exclude them is the worst we can do."

Thus was von der Weid’s inspiration for Antenna Technologies, the Swiss foundation committed to scientific research for technological, health and economic solutions to meet the basic needs of marginalised populations in developing countries. It researches and field tests developing technologies and helps create companies based on the technologies that have an economic future.

Antenna works in partnership with universities, non-profit organisations and private companies to address issues such as drinkable water, nutrition, medicinal plants, agriculture and energy, with the objective of ensuring the autonomy of local people. "We have to address the essential needs for the lowest income group as a policy," he says.

Antenna began by supplying radio transmitters to human rights activists, believing that the liberty to speak is a basic human right. Without a tool to share that speech, the right has no meaning, von der Weid says. "In Asia, and particularly in Africa, the radio is the most important tool and should be open to everybody."

Building on that idea, Antenna began researching other uses of technology to improve the lives of the lowest income populations, beginning with nutrition. It developed local production methods for growing spirulina, a microalgae that is rich in the micronutrients and vitamins needed to fight malnutrition.

Today, the Foundation is active in about 20 countries with several field programmes. But that's only a start, says Denis. "We have not yet finished," he says. "We hope in the future to add more technologies. We also hope that large companies and economic institutions will discover that this a very important area where they should think and invest."

One day, he'd like to see hundreds of organisations like Antenna. For now, the biggest challenge is time. Developing a new technology involves years of research, field testing, improvements and distribution.

"To reach the lowest income takes a minimum of three years, and sometimes even 10," he says. "But since we know that we are right, and we are convinced that what we do makes sense, we don't mind about time."

He concludes: "We are not pretending to change the world, but let's do what is within our reach."
Sameer Hajee
MBA’04D
Co-founder and CEO of Nuru Energy
INSEAD Alumni Force for Good Award
"I saw how impactful technology was in the hands of the poor and the difference it made in their lives."

Background and Key Accomplishments

- Grew up in Canada
- Earned a BS in electrical engineering from McMaster University and an MBA from INSEAD
- Started out as a microprocessor engineer in Silicon Valley
- Worked as a telecom engineer in Kabul for Roshan, Afghanistan's first mobile network provider
- Served in Kenya as a consultant with the United Nations Development Programme
- Spent two years with Freeplay Energy marketing crank radios and off-grid products in rural Africa as Director of Global Business Development
- Founded Nuru Energy in 2009, an international social enterprise addressing energy poverty in Africa and India. Seed-funded by the World Bank, the company has won more than 20 global awards for its efforts
- Featured in an MBA case study written by INSEAD
- Named 2012 Social Entrepreneur of the Year, Africa, by the Schwab Foundation/World Economic Forum
- Serves as an INSEAD social entrepreneur-in-residence and a mentor/coach of the INSEAD Venture Competition
- Currently lives in South Africa
Sameer Hajee believes in the power of technology to create a better world. He was always fascinated with electronics and gadgets, but the idea that they could be used to benefit society is what drew him to working with microprocessors in Silicon Valley.

But tinkering with tech wasn’t enough—he wanted to design things that changed lives. “I didn’t feel the connection between what I was doing and the reason I went into engineering, which was to see the smile on someone’s face when they receive a product that you developed,” Hajee shares.

He decided to pursue an MBA at INSEAD, impressed by the unique international nature of the programme. A friend working in Afghanistan with the United Nations suggested he use the time before courses started to help in Kabul, where they were desperate for engineers. The six months he spent working there with a telecom provider changed everything.

“That was where the spark happened,” he remembers. “I saw how impactful technology was in the hands of the poor and the difference it made in their lives.”

With a new mission to use his engineering and business skills for international development, Hajee served in Kenya as a consultant with the United Nations Development Programme, brokering partnerships between companies and the government for pro-poor, pro-profit social enterprises. He became aware of the extreme energy poverty in the country, where many villages had no access to electricity.

The issue resonated with Hajee. A friend put him in touch with the founder of Freeplay Energy, a solar and hand-crank products developer for the camping market. Recognising that there was a great opportunity to help African villages without power, Hajee spent two years working to get Freeplay’s products into the hands of the poor.

The experience gave him the idea for Nuru Energy, a social enterprise founded in 2008 that provides clean energy access to households living below the poverty line in villages without electricity in Africa and India. Hajee studied energy use among the poorest in Rwanda, discovering they only needed a small amount to power lights, mobile phones and radios.

But solutions such as kerosene were dangerous, and solar options were too expensive for those living below the poverty line (earning less than $1.25 a day) or the extreme poverty line (earning less than $0.50 per day).

Nuru Energy’s unique off-grid, pay-as-you-go recharging platform was a revelation. Customers could purchase inexpensive, rechargeable LED lights, which they took to charging stations that used an innovative system of human pedal power, and now solar energy, to recharge any USB-chargeable device. The model offers cheap energy to customers and employment to the micro-entrepreneurs running recharging stations.

“It impacts the lives of both the entrepreneur and the end-user household,” Hajee says. “These are places where people are doing backbreaking activities to earn very little, and we’ve been able to provide a business in a box that allows them to work from home.”

Nuru has set up more than 1,100 village-level recharging businesses that provide energy access to 123,000 households. But with a mission to bring clean energy to every village in the world, they still have a long way to go.

“We’re working with households below the poverty line, which is 50 percent of the continent of Africa,” Hajee says. “It’s challenging because this market has the least amount of disposable income.”

While the company’s business model has tremendous impact and is profitable, it does not generate the kind of profits that investors expect, which has been a struggle, says Hajee. They’ve raised more than $7 million in mostly grant money, but he hopes in the future either impact investors will temper their expectations or donor-funding sources will grow, such as Kiva.org, an international nonprofit that allows people to lend money to entrepreneurs attempting to alleviate poverty.

“We hope to have access to a lot more capital to deploy this to a lot more villages that don’t have power,” he says. “It is where the need is greatest and people benefit the most from just a little access to clean energy.”
Kevin Ryan
MBA’90D
Founder, Chairman & CEO, AlleyCorp
INSEAD Alumni Global Entrepreneurship Award
“In our second year at Gilt, we did about $150 million in revenue. It changed the industry.”

Background and Key Accomplishments

• Grew up in Geneva and Rome
• Earned a BA from Yale University and an MBA from INSEAD
• Held management and executive positions at Prudential Financial, Euro Disney and United Media
• Joined DoubleClick in 1996, serving as president and CEO. Led the company from a startup with fewer than 20 people to a 1,500-employee online advertising leader
• Founded AlleyCorp in 2007, launching new companies and investing in early-stage enterprises
• Launched online fashion retailer Gilt Groupe, news website Business Insider, next-generation database MongoDB, wedding website Zola, real estate platform Workframe and online healthcare job marketplace Nomad Health
• Named one of the 100 Most Influential New Yorkers of the Past 25 Years by the Observer in 2013
• Served on the boards of Human Rights Watch and Doctors Without Borders and as Vice Chairman of The Partnership for New York City
• Served as INSEAD Board Member and Chairman IAA USA
• Lives in New York with his wife, Pascaline Servan-Schreiber MBA’90D, whom he met at INSEAD, and their three children, who hope to go to INSEAD too.
When Kevin Ryan interviewed at digital advertising startup DoubleClick in 1996, there were very few Internet companies around. The immense potential for online ventures had yet to be proven, but Ryan was drawn to the possibilities. "It wasn't obvious then that someday everyone would be online and that it would change every aspect of communication," Ryan remembers, "but I was so excited and optimistic about what was happening."

Impressed by DoubleClick's vision that online ads would become a big part of the future of advertising and marketing, Ryan joined the company as President when there were fewer than 20 employees. By the time the company sold for $1.1 billion in 2005, Ryan led more than 1,500 employees in 25 countries as CEO. Three years later, Google acquired DoubleClick for $3.1 billion.

Managing the company's rapid growth and success was a challenging and exhilarating experience. "We took the company public 24 months after we started, which is crazy," he says. "You have to set up the accounting and everything you need to be a public company while you're building it internationally and expanding really quickly. It was a remarkable time and a very exciting period of my life."

The experience left a lasting impression on Ryan, who has devoted his career since leaving DoubleClick in 2005 to launching online startups with DoubleClick Chief Technology Officer and Co-founder Dwight Merriman. Today, Ryan is considered a leading Internet entrepreneur, investor, civic activist and philanthropist. As Founder and Chairman of New-York-based AlleyCorp, he helps launch and invest in online startups. The company's successes include Gilt Groupe, Business Insider, MongoDB, Zola, Workframe and Nomad Health.

After the intense growth of DoubleClick, Ryan was keen to explore new online technologies across a wide range of topics. Investing in and co-founding ventures offered the opportunity to keep things fresh and exciting, while utilising the valuable lessons he learned at DoubleClick.

"It was like having 30 years of experience condensed into nine," he shares. "It made me a better business person and put me in a position to have judgment and expertise that was helpful in managing the CEOs of the new companies I started."

AlleyCorp oversees 10 independent companies, with Ryan serving as chairman and founder of each one. He enjoys the challenge of launching something new and building it up over time. One example is the online business news site Business Insider. When it launched, many people told Ryan he wouldn't be able to compete with The Wall Street Journal.

"Seven years later, our traffic was double that of The Wall Street Journal," he says. "People passed it on, found it online and went to our site. This month, 150 million people will read Business Insider."

Adapting traditional business ideas to the online space is Ryan's talent. What started as a way to bring fashion sample and flash sales to customers' computers rather than having to attend in person blossomed into luxury online retailer Gilt Groupe. It was an idea influenced by his time at INSEAD, where he heard about French flash sales player Vente-Privee. He took the concept and successfully applied it to the U.S. market.

"In our second year at Gilt, we did about $150 million in revenue," he says. "It became popular, and many people launched competitors. It changed the industry and the ways that fashion was sold in the United States."

A dedicated philanthropist, Ryan believes in giving back to the schools that helped him develop his business acumen by serving on boards at Yale and INSEAD. He's also involved in a number of public-private partnerships in New York City and active in Human Rights Watch and Doctors Without Borders. In addition to enjoying life with his family, one of Ryan's future goals is to spend more time in the nonprofit space, perhaps even starting one of his own.

"With nonprofits, just like every other aspect of society, the Internet is playing a bigger role, whether it's raising money, communicating or changing what they can do," he says. "My experience is valuable for that."
Harjeev Kandhari
MBA’02J
Founder and CEO of
Zenises and Zenises Foundation
INSEAD Alumni Emerging Entrepreneur Award
Background and Key Accomplishments

- Born in Hyderabad, India. Grew up in Dubai
- Educated in the United Kingdom at the Rugby School and the London School of Economics. Earned a BA and MA in philosophy, politics and economics at the University of Oxford. Earned an MBA with Distinction from INSEAD
- Worked in investment banking at Merrill Lynch in London
- Helped found New Media Spark, a UK-based technology private equity firm. Involved in creating EO.com, one of the first online IPO platforms
- Returned to Dubai in 2002 to revitalise the family's local tyre distributing business by taking a more globalised approach and expanding to Europe and China
- Established Zenises in 2014, setting new standards in tyre manufacturing and creating an innovative subscription approach, with offices in the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Germany, Italy and Spain
- Created Zenises Foundation to support multiple charitable projects for the disadvantaged in India, Africa and Europe

“There's nobody else in the world that does this.”
Harjeev Kandhari wants his son to understand that not every little boy in the world has enough to eat each day. Since Siraj was three years old, Kandhari has taken his son along on trips to support his philanthropic work with disadvantaged communities in India.

The first time Siraj accompanied him, Kandhari told his young son that there was no difference between him and the children they were helping, aside from the fact that he happened to be born into a family that could afford to take care of him. “I told him, ‘There’s no reason why this child should be poor and not have three meals a day, while you do,’” Kandhari shares.

Later that day, when it came time for Siraj’s afternoon snack, Kandhari looked up to see the three-year-old boy offering his snack box to all the other kids. “For me, that was God paying me back for what I do for these children, to see my son recognising that he should share, and that sharing is caring,” he says. “The more I give, the more I get. I genuinely believe that.”

Although Kandhari has built a successful multinational, customer-focused business as founder and CEO of Zenises, known as the “Netflix of tyres,” it’s his philanthropic work that fuels him. The harder he works to make his venture successful, the more he can help the poorest in the world through Zenises Foundation. It’s an approach to business that believes in building great products, brands and partners to create a better world.

Zenises employees see the value of their work reflected in the social impact the company has made in India, Africa and Europe, which gives their roles a sense of purpose, he says. It’s this innovative way of thinking that led Kandhari, a fourth-generation entrepreneur, to the idea for Zenises in the first place.

After revitalising the family’s Dubai-based tyre distributing business, Kandhari felt there was a better way to approach the market. In 2014, he founded Zenises, considered to be the world’s first premier global tyre subscription service. For a flat, monthly fee of €4.99 or €2.99, Zenises takes care of its customers’ tyre needs for life, whether they drive one kilometre or one million, he says.

“We’ve converted a commoditised product into a service,” he explains. “There’s nobody else in the world that does this. It was Blue Ocean Strategy thinking, something I learned at INSEAD.”

The London- and Dubai-based company has offices around the world and operates in 20 countries. It offers Z Tyre, a high-performance tyre that combines technical innovation with aesthetics and value, and T Tyre, a more budget-conscious range of quality tyres.

While Zenises is one of the leading budget tyre distributors in Europe, its true mission is to improve lives by ensuring that 10 percent of profits go toward Zenises Foundation initiatives to educate and feed impoverished children in the developing world.

“Anybody can write a check, but it’s very difficult to build a sustainable organisation that will continue going forward to educate children, build homes and feed people,” he says. “We feed 125,000 people a day—that’s part of why I’m doing my business.”

The company is also dedicated to gender equality and diversity, with a goal to elevate women and people of colour within the white, male-dominated automotive industry. “We’re changing the way people think,” Kandhari says. “I don’t want to do this the same old traditional way.”

Creating an organisation that values its employees and motivates them to use business as a force for good in the world is its own reward. “I feel that profit and purpose go hand in hand,” Kandhari says. “I’m not interested in making money for the sake of making money. I’m interested in building that value chain so that tomorrow, I can look my son in the eye and say, ‘I built this ethically, righteously, sensibly, and I can make a real difference in somebody else’s life.’”
Leonidas Los
MBA’75
Retired Shipping Agent and Broker
with Tri-Marine Shipping Co.
INSEAD Alumni Volunteer Leader Award
“By making the necessary funds available to our Dean to invest in the future of the school, we will all be winners.”

Background and Key Accomplishments

• Canadian with Greek roots; educated in the United Kingdom
• Earned a licence ès sciences économiques – option économie industrielle from the University of Neuchatel
• Now retired
• Led the INSEAD Alumni Fund Board as Chairman 2011-16
• Has served as a member of the INSEAD Board since 2011 and on numerous committees
• Member of INSEAD Greek National Council
• Raised funds for Greek Friends of INSEAD Scholarship Fund, created in 2008
• Established the INSEAD Leonidas and Eirini Los Family Award scholarship for Greek candidates
• Member of the INSEAD Circle of Patrons since 2014
• Married with two children All this would not have been possible without the undivided support of his wife, Eirini, and his children, Tassos MAP’12, and Maria MAP’16
When Leonidas Los became Chairman of the INSEAD Alumni Fund (IAF) in 2011, talking about fundraising felt like treading on eggshells, but he didn’t let that dissuade him. Convinced that donations are essential to the future wellbeing of the school and its graduates, he was determined to engage more alumni in the cause.

"For the school to continue to move forward, fundraising is critical," he says. "INSEAD must have the means to invest in academic and research excellence and to renew the physical fabric of the school. It must also expand the availability of scholarships to attract the best candidates across all continents."

The endorsement of fundraising started with previous Deans J. Frank Brown and Dipak Jain and previous Chairman of the INSEAD Board Franz Humer MBA’71. It continued to grow under Andreas Jacobs MBA’90D, INSEAD Board Chairman since 2014, and Dean Ilian Mihov, as well as Joanne Shoveller, Associate Dean of Advancement from 2012 to 2016.

Los sees donations as investments in the future of the INSEAD family. Many life-long friendships began for him there, and he still meets with members of his class for annual gatherings. It’s INSEAD’s close sense of community that fuelled his service on the INSEAD Board and numerous committees. "I wanted to stay involved with the school that changed my life," he says.

He is also a member of INSEAD’s Greek National Council. To ensure more talented Greek candidates have the opportunity to experience INSEAD, he raised funds for the Greek Friends of INSEAD Scholarship Fund and established the INSEAD Leonidas and Eirini Los Family Award scholarship.

"We've been able to support Greek MBA students who would otherwise not be able to attend INSEAD," he shares. "It's very gratifying to help students in this way. We've had some wonderful scholarship recipients, and it is always nice to get to know the person we are helping."

Raised in a philanthropic-minded family, he remembers his father’s lessons of generosity and helping those in need. His first fundraising efforts involved collecting money for his church, where no amount was too little.

He applied that same philosophy to his work with INSEAD. "I have always contributed to the IAF, because from the beginning, I believed in the importance of alumni support," he explains. "We can afford to help, so this is what we want to do. Everybody gives according to their means, and there are no small gifts.” Philanthropy should be inclusive, not exclusive, he says.

In addition to ensuring that every donor was personally thanked, he enhanced donor recognition through supporting initiatives such as the INSEAD Investors’ Circle, Salamander Pins (an inspiration of German Trustee Bettina Langenberg IEP’97) and Dean's Leadership Cocktails. He encouraged student engagement via the Young Alumni Initiative. He also worked closely with the INSEAD Alumni Association (IAA) and, more specifically, with IAA President and Board Member Sadia Khan MBA’95D, to increase alumni participation.

Thanks to him, alumni see donating to INSEAD as an investment. They are able to see their returns in the Donors Report, which tells stories about donors and recipients and how INSEAD changed their lives.

More than anything, his commitment has inspired other alumni to follow his example and volunteer. He credits all the staff and volunteers for the fundraising strides INSEAD has made in recent years. Gifts from alumni increased from over €2 million in 2011/12 to over €18 million in 2015/16.

"Annual fundraising has progressed substantially, thanks to a team effort," Los says. "What we achieved would not be possible without the engagement of our fundraising volunteers, the increased support of alumni leadership, the spirit of collaboration with the IAA, the NAAs and the IAF, and the dedication and hard work of the Advancement and Alumni Relations team."

"It has been a privilege to head up fundraising efforts and engage with good human beings who add another dimension to our lives," he says. Stepping down from the role of Chairman in 2016, he'll be remembered as an inclusive leader who built a strong team spirit. Helping INSEAD reach even higher has been its own reward.

"It's incredibly fulfilling to meet so many like-minded alumni around the globe and to see the impact the INSEAD experience has on people's lives and careers," he shares. "By making the necessary funds available to our Dean to invest in the future of the school, we will all be winners.”
Alexandra von Schroeter
MBA’87J, IDP-C’17Feb
Partner, Head of Strategic Business and Portfolio Manager with Cumberland Private Wealth Management
INSEAD Alumni Volunteer Leader Award
“The most fulfilling aspect of the work is knowing that I’m invested in INSEAD.”

Background and Key Accomplishments

• Grew up in Montreal, Canada
• Received a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Queen’s University at Kingston, Canada, and a diploma in French Literature from Université de Paris-Sorbonne
• Earned an MBA and an International Director’s Certification (IDP’16) from INSEAD
• Worked in commercial banking at the Bank of Montreal
• Spent 12 years at CIBC Wood Gundy in investment banking, mergers and acquisitions and capital markets in Toronto, London and New York as Director and Vice President
• Became an investor, and as partner at Cumberland Private Wealth since joining in 1999, continues to build and lead a top 10 independent wealth management firm in Canada
• Holds the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation
• Serves as Trustee of the Canadian Foundation for INSEAD, member of its National Council Canada and Capital Campaign Board
• Served on the INSEAD Alumni Fund’s Global Board for 15 years
• Raised in excess of €1 million for INSEAD
• Achieved Gold Salamander status and in 2018 pledged for Platinum status
• Proud of her son Henry (23), lives in Toronto, Canada
Alexandra von Schroeter remembers her time at INSEAD as one of the best years of her life. Growing up in Montreal while attending a French school, she loved the French language and later broke away to study it again at Sorbonne University. She has always felt comfortable in France and was drawn to INSEAD by its location and the distinct international flavour of the curriculum, faculty and students.

“It was a great learning experience—it allowed me to fill the gaps in areas of business that I needed to propel my career onto a track that had a lot of upside,” she explains. “I loved the diversity, with students from different walks of life, ages and countries.”

The friendships von Schroeter made have lasted a lifetime, and the knowledge she gained has been indispensable. She describes the experience as life-changing. “It allowed me to move into a job where I essentially tripled my salary on day one,” she says. “It led me to the path that I wanted to take.”

Because INSEAD was such an important part of her life, von Schroeter was eager to give back to the school. She began thinking about volunteering when her good friend, Canadian business leader and philanthropist Blake Goldring MBA’82, urged her to take over his position as INSEAD Fundraising Chair for Canada. Von Schroeter enjoyed the opportunity to help INSEAD thrive and eventually joined the INSEAD Alumni Fund’s Global Board, serving for a total of three terms over 15 years.

“I wanted to do something that helped move the needle to help the school reach the next level,” she shares. “INSEAD is a very dynamic institution and has been going through stages of critical change since it was founded. It has been ahead of the curve because it isn’t funded by any other university or government. It’s truly independent, always looking to the future.”

This unique aspect of INSEAD allows it to be innovative and push the limits, von Schroeter says. She’s proud to have helped the school achieve new heights, fondly remembering some major events in its evolution like the opening of the Asia Campus in Singapore, which she was honoured to attend. Together with fellow alumni, she is credited with raising more than €1 million for INSEAD through efforts such as a high-profile annual fundraising dinner in Canada. She sees it as an investment in both the school’s future and her own.

“Being involved with INSEAD has let me get closer to the school, the professors and the people working there,” she says. “Being involved locally in Canada has helped me get to know a cross-section of alumni and bring them together. We all benefit from the networking and constant learning that comes from being close.”

With a 30-year banking and investment management career, von Schroeter is uniquely qualified to support INSEAD’s fundraising efforts. As Partner and Head of Strategic Business at Cumberland Private Wealth, she’s helped the company become a leading independent wealth management firm in Canada over the past two decades. Looking ahead, she plans to apply her experience as a member of INSEAD’s Capital Campaign Board for Canada, recently making a personal commitment to achieve Platinum Salamander status.

“I enjoy helping the school engage alumni and get support from the very people who are walking and talking the brand every day,” she says. “I’ve been able to communicate with alumni and tell the INSEAD story.”

The desire to include more talented people in the INSEAD story prompted von Schroeter to help her class set up an endowment as their reunion class gift. The fund benefits one scholar from emerging markets each year. Together with a team, she also helped establish an endowed fund for high-potential Canadian MBA scholars.

“The most fulfilling aspect of the work is knowing that I’m invested in INSEAD,” she says. “It’s one of the ways that I define myself and know that I can contribute to a bright future and a better world.”
Tsunehiro Nakayama
MBA’75
Retired Chairman with Merrill Lynch Japan Securities Co.
INSEAD Alumni Volunteer Leader Award
"We all wanted to have the Japanese corporate community recognise INSEAD so that it would have more influence in Japan."

Background and Key Accomplishments

- Grew up in the United Kingdom and Japan
- Earned a BA in Economics from Keio University and an MBA from INSEAD
- Served as Deputy President of Mizuho Corporate Bank, spending 36 years with the company and its predecessor, Industrial Bank of Japan
- Retired as Chairman from Merrill Lynch Japan Securities Co. in 2017 after working with the company for 10 years
- Served as Vice Chairman of Merrill Lynch International Inc. and as a member of the firm's Global Executive Management Committee
- Helped rebuild INSEAD's Japan National Council after its 2006 dissolution, heading up the new group as President for nearly a decade
- Strengthened ties with the National Alumni Association and encouraged NAA Japan's successful 2015 Asia Alumni Forum in Tokyo
- Improved the profile of INSEAD across corporate Japan, resulting in a large increase in Japanese corporate clients for INSEAD's customised Executive Education Programmes
- Achieved Green Pin status in 2015
- Lives in Tokyo
When INSEAD’s Japan National Council dissolved in 2006, it took the country’s alumni community by surprise. Like many other graduates, Tsunehiro Nakayama was deeply concerned about the negative consequences it could have on INSEAD’s brand image. As one of the most senior and respected Japanese alumni, INSEAD asked Nakayama to take the lead in rebuilding the council.

Thus began a deep conversation between the alumni community and the school about how best to represent INSEAD and serve the local community. The result was an agreement in 2009 to reestablish the Japan National Council with Nakayama as President.

The previous council did not include alumni, a factor many felt contributed to its dissolution. Nakayama identified alumni engagement as key to establishing a successful council and recruited senior executive alumni to serve. Strengthening ties with Japan’s National Alumni Association (NAA) was also a priority, as around the same time, a group of highly motivated alumni volunteers were engaging in a complete revamp of NAA Japan to create a vibrant alumni platform. To take advantage of this positive momentum and facilitate synergies between the two organisations, he ensured that the NAA Japan President was a permanent invitee to the council.

“We wanted the new council to be a group of people who know INSEAD best,” he explains. “We all wanted to have the Japanese corporate community recognise INSEAD so that it would have more influence in Japan.”

Increasing INSEAD’s profile in Japan has been a goal of the group that Nakayama led for nearly a decade. As he steps down from his role as President, he sees the council’s achievements as a shared triumph.

“It was a big surprise to receive the Volunteer Leader Award, because it was a joint operation on the part of all the Japan National Council members and also the National Alumni Association of Japan, who were instrumental,” he says. “We were all trying to promote INSEAD very seriously. It’s the teamwork that made us successful, and I am accepting the award for the whole team.”

Modest about his role, the accomplished global banker and retired Chairman of Merrill Lynch Japan Securities Co. leveraged his personal network connections with the Japanese business community to raise INSEAD’s profile. Nakayama and his team were instrumental in acquiring major corporate clients for INSEAD’s customised Executive Education programmes, making Japan one of its fastest-growing markets in Asia.

“We knew that there would be a lot of demand on the corporate side for the kind of high-level Executive Education that INSEAD offers,” he says. “Thanks to the assistance that we got from INSEAD, a number of large corporations decided to do [INSEAD Programmes], such as Mizuho Bank, Mitsubishi Corp. and Shiseido. I can tell you that they were very happy with our programmes and professors.”

It’s been rewarding to work on behalf of the school that gave him so much, says Nakayama. He remembers his time at INSEAD fondly. It was particularly special for him to be in Fontainebleau while his father was the Japanese Ambassador to France. “I was married and had a daughter already, so it was nice to be close to her grandparents in Paris,” he shares. “I went to boarding school in England when I was younger, so Europe felt like my second home district.”

INSEAD’s international quality was what attracted Nakayama and many of the friends he made there. “It gave us a lot of confidence that we were able to work and compete with a very interesting bunch of people from all over the world,” he says. “You felt you were working among peers on an international level, and that kind of experience gave me an open-mindedness.”

Although Nakayama is retiring from his leadership role, he will continue to root for his school. “I will always like to see INSEAD succeed,” he says. “That feeling of love for the school, I think it doesn’t matter how old I am, if there’s anything that I can do, I’m very happy to assist.”
Awards Committee

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