

SOAS
University of London

**Your Philanthropy
Impact 2024–25**

The World's University

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Thank you



I am delighted to share that it has been another landmark year for SOAS. Thanks to your support, for the second consecutive year, we raised over £10 million in philanthropic funds; a milestone that reflects the shared vision we have for this unique institution. Thank you! This achievement would not have been possible without you. Your generosity ensures we continue to deliver cutting-edge research, world-class teaching, and provide life-changing resources for students who will shape the world of tomorrow.

This year, we have celebrated incredible achievements that would never have happened without the collective efforts of our community. Together, we advanced the goals of our previous strategic plan, launched in 2021, which set out to renew and revitalise SOAS and position us to play a leading role in reimagining higher education globally.

Looking ahead, we have launched a new five-year strategy through 2030 that will set a clear and ambitious path forward. This plan will focus on growing student numbers, with a strong emphasis on postgraduate taught programmes, supported by targeted scholarships to attract and enable talented students from diverse backgrounds. We will deepen partnerships that extend our global reach, embed sustainability at the heart of our plans, and ensure resources are focused where they deliver the greatest impact.

Despite challenges facing the sector, the organisation continues to remain in a strong and stable financial position. We also remain committed to our core mission: to teach students, produce world-class research, and be a place that enables deep deliberation on the challenges of our world. Most importantly, we will continue to build bridges of solidarity between the UK and the majoritarian world, because without these bridges, we cannot heal the divides that affect our human community.

Thank you for being an essential part of this journey. In this report, you'll read some of the exciting stories that your generosity has made possible. I hope you enjoy and take pride in the impact we are creating together.

Professor Adam Habib
Vice-Chancellor



Your Impact 2024–25

Total new donations
£10,020,538



£46,240
from 208 regular donors

Total endowment
£64,755,666



Number of donors
522



Number of philanthropic scholarships and bursaries awarded
87

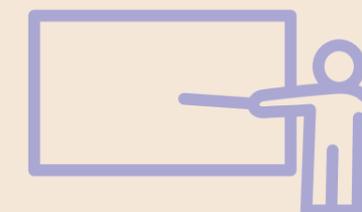


Top **5** countries donating

- | BY TOTAL DONATED | BY NUMBER OF DONORS |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1 UK | 1 UK |
| 2 CHINA | 2 HONG KONG |
| 3 USA | 3 SINGAPORE |
| 4 MALTA | 4 USA |
| 5 TAIWAN | 5 CANADA |

Top **3** projects receiving donations

- 1 DIGITISATION
- 2 SCHOLARSHIPS
- 3 CHAIR POSITIONS



Scholarship donations
£3,230,966
from 163 donors



The Cutlers' Company Travel Bursaries

Established in 2023, The Cutlers' Company Travel Bursaries enable talented undergraduate students across our language programmes to spend a year abroad as part of their degree with fewer financial concerns.



In September 2025, 16 students headed off on their travels to countries including China, Egypt, Japan, Jordan, Korea and Turkey.

The opportunity to engage in a study abroad programme, which focuses on language and cultural immersion, is crucial to the development of language students. This part of their studies has become extremely challenging for students with the increases in the cost of living in recent years. Support for bursaries and scholarships is our top priority at SOAS and this generous gift has played an important part in helping us to achieve this mission.

The Cutlers' Company Travel Bursaries have had a significant impact on the lives of languages students this year, giving them the confidence to embark on their study abroad with fewer financial worries and the ability to fully participate in cultural activities and travel once there. Our goal is to have this opportunity available to students whatever their financial circumstances.

"The Cutlers' Company Travel Bursaries are an essential resource for us as we send students on a transformative Language Year Abroad. The ten or so students who receive the scholarship every year are able to put the funds towards supplementing their classroom education with experiential learning around the country they're visiting, allowing them to increase their culture immersion. We are so grateful to the Cutlers' Company for sustaining this scholarship."

Ilana Webster-Kogen
Head of School of Languages,
Cultures and Linguistics

The Beena Sondhi LLM Scholarship

The Beena Sondhi LLM Scholarship at SOAS was established in 2025 to support Indian lawyers dedicated to human rights, conflict, and justice.

Offering full tuition for the LLM in Human Rights, Conflict, and Justice, the scholarship strengthens SOAS's commitment to widening access and amplifying voices that are too often excluded from the study and practice of law. Rooted in a belief in equity, representation, and the transformative power of education, this award enables talented graduates to deepen their expertise and contribute to urgent conversations shaping justice in India and the wider world.

The scholarship for 2025–26 has been awarded to Amala Dasarathi, a practising lawyer who will use her time at SOAS to deepen her grounding in human rights and the rule of law. Amala believes this scholarship will be of huge value to her, reflecting 'having never worked in lucrative professional spaces, this scholarship did not just fund my degree. It has opened doors I never imagined I would be able to walk through.'

The scholarship honours the memory of Beena Sondhi, whose life and legacy inspired her son, Senior Advocate Aditya Sondhi, to open doors for others. Practising before the Supreme Court of India, Aditya has spent his career advancing constitutionalism and public law, and his engagement with SOAS stretches back to 2019, when he delivered a lecture on Judicial Independence and Indian Constitutionalism. His connection to the School has strengthened



over the years through academic collaboration and shared commitment to human rights.

For Aditya, establishing the scholarship is both a tribute and an intervention. He hopes it will encourage Indian lawyers, particularly those from marginalised or minority communities, to pursue further study in human rights and conflict. "There are several invisible, brilliant individuals waiting for a little nudge to help them explore their full potential," he reflects. "And for some of us at our stations in life, it is a good time to pay it forward."

By enabling access to SOAS's world-leading expertise in the Global South and its distinct focus on critical, decolonial legal thought, the award provides scholars with an environment where their perspectives are valued and their lived experiences recognised.

SOAS Professor Eddie Bruce-Jones expresses deep gratitude for Aditya's support: "We are so grateful to Aditya for his visionary support of this scholarship. Many excellent students can come to SOAS thanks to the generosity of donors like him. The strength and diversity of our student body wouldn't be what it is without philanthropic support."

Scholarships like the Beena Sondhi LLM Scholarship make higher education accessible to those who might otherwise be excluded. They help determine whose voices shape legal scholarship, whose realities inform policy, and who gets to participate in building more equitable systems. Supporting such initiatives is not only an investment in individual careers, but in the communities, movements, and futures they will go on to influence.

Hyundai Motor Group Scholarship

We have been delighted to deepen our relationship with Hyundai Motor Group through a landmark new partnership that will play a crucial role in shaping the next generation of African leaders.



Hyundai Motor Group has built on its support for SOAS with a landmark new scholarship programme, aiming to shape the next generation of African leaders.

Beginning in the academic year 2025–26, Hyundai Motor Group will support exceptional Masters and PhD students from across Africa to pursue postgraduate study at SOAS, removing barriers to education for outstanding students and building a powerful network of peers, mentors and professionals. With this support, scholars will be equipped not only with world-class academic training but also with the tools and confidence needed to translate their expertise into long-term impact in their home countries.



This partnership represents a forward-looking model designed to accompany students long after they complete their studies. Scholars will be invited to take part in a range of networking events, seminars and development

opportunities hosted by Hyundai Motor Group, strengthening cross-regional connections and supporting a vibrant community of emerging African leaders.

This forward-looking model can already be seen in our inaugural cohort of Hyundai scholars, who have in their first term been able to meet with colleagues from Hyundai as part of their wider development and are so excited to be a part of this future network of students. The scholars are studying a wide range of subjects from Medical Anthropology and Mental Health, LLM, and PhD Development Economics, which as one of our scholars reflected has greatly helped them in their studies: "this scholarship has given me the chance to get a different perspective on life, I am grateful to Hyundai for giving me this opportunity, and I will make sure to be a great ambassador of this programme".

This partnership stands as a testament to what can be achieved when education, philanthropy and global leadership come together with a shared purpose. It marks an inspiring new chapter in SOAS's mission to support the next generation of changemakers who will help shape a more just and sustainable world.

Tsinghua Digitisation Project

SOAS Library is one of the UK's five National Research Libraries and one of the most important libraries in the world for the study of Asia, Africa and the Near and Middle East.

Thanks to the support of Tsinghua University Education Foundation, the Digitisation Centre and Special Collections have embarked on a landmark project to preserve and share some of the most precious and fragile items held in the SOAS Special Collections: approximately 400 palm-leaf manuscripts and 375 early printed books related to Africa.

These rare and irreplaceable materials are being carefully digitised to the highest international imaging standards and made accessible to researchers, students, and the wider public around the world.

Alongside the digitisation process, the project is enabling essential conservation work to protect the physical items from further deterioration, ensuring they are preserved for future generations.

A dedicated team of experts (including experts in the eighteen languages found in the palm-leaf manuscripts) are working to produce detailed catalogue descriptions that will generate rich metadata. This will make the materials significantly more accessible and easier to discover and study. Remarkably, around 20% of the palm-leaf manuscripts are currently listed as being in unidentified languages. As part of this project, we aim to identify the texts these manuscripts contain, determine their languages, and,



where possible, establish their dates of creation and places of origin. In doing so, we will be bringing this knowledge to light for the first time since these manuscripts entered the collection, making them accessible not only to researchers, but also to the communities from which they originated.

Although the cataloguing of these collections is still only in phase one, the results are already remarkable. Notably, our experts have successfully dated one of the lesser-known palm leaf

manuscripts to the 15th or 16th century, identifying it as one of the oldest palm leaf manuscripts in our holdings: an exciting indication of the discoveries still to come.

We are deeply grateful to Tsinghua University Education Foundation for making this remarkable work possible. Their support is helping us protect these irreplaceable materials, and open up new avenues for research.



Dr Mai Yamani Scholarship

Through the generosity of alumni and friends, we were able to support 87 students through 25 philanthropically funded scholarship programmes in the academic year 2024–25. These students include the first recipients of the Dr Mai Yamani Scholarship, created through the generosity of Dr Mai Yamani, a former SOAS academic and a passionate supporter of education. Below, you will find out more about the transformational impact of Mai's support, and her reasons for giving.



Dr Mai Yamani's commitment to supporting students at SOAS is grounded in her own remarkable educational journey. Growing up in Saudi Arabia at a time when schools for girls were scarce, Mai's mother took her to Baghdad so she could study. She later attended a historic women's college in the United States and became the first Saudi woman to earn a DPhil from Oxford. These experiences forged a conviction that has guided her life: education transforms lives.

"SOAS is the world leading institute for bringing people together," Mai reflects. Her decision to support scholarships here is rooted in this belief in an institution that mirrors her own values of global connection in intellectual curiosity and social responsibility.

For Mai, education is both a privilege and a duty. Her scholarship supports students from Africa and the Arab world who face systemic hurdles to accessing higher education, ensuring

they too can benefit from the opportunities she fought to secure. "I find that I have one mission, and that is contributing to education," a mission that now shapes the futures of many young people.

The first cohort of scholars supported by the Dr Mai Yamani Scholarship already embodies the lifechanging impact envisioned. With the freedom to study without financial pressure, they pursued work in areas including gender equality, climate resilience and social justice.

One student shared: "This scholarship has changed my life. It's not just about finance – it's about having a voice."

Another said: "You've shown me that the sky is the limit. This is just the beginning."

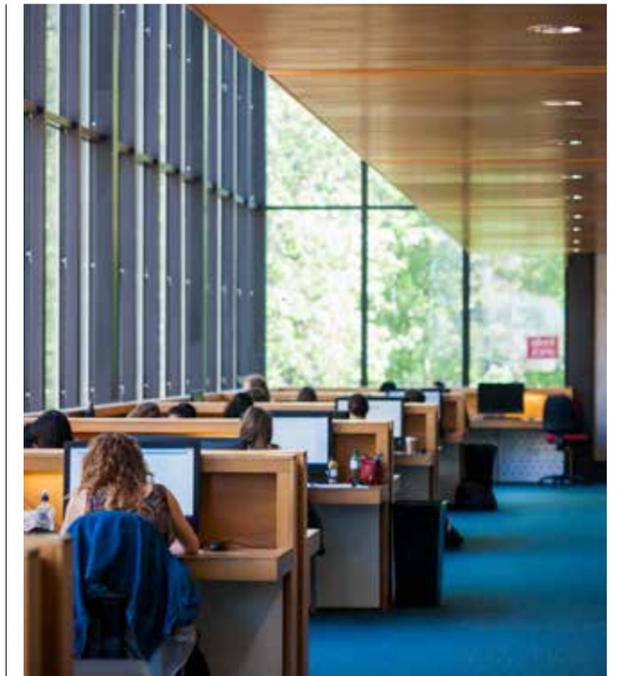
These testimonies capture the transformational nature of Mai's philanthropy and vision: every scholarship creates a multiplier effect. Students become advocates, innovators, and changemakers, impacting families, communities, and entire regions.

Legacies

Leaving a gift in your will is a meaningful way to ensure that your connection with SOAS continues into the future. Many of the opportunities our students and academics enjoy today have been made possible through the generosity of those who chose to remember SOAS in their wills. These legacies have supported teaching, student wellbeing and many other vital areas of university life.



There are several ways to include SOAS in your will. You may choose to leave a residuary gift – a portion of your estate after you have provided for your loved ones. Alternatively, you can leave a pecuniary gift, specifying a fixed amount you wish to donate. Some supporters also choose to leave items of value, such as property or artwork, which can be sold to benefit SOAS.



Arranging a legacy gift is often more straightforward than people expect. A solicitor can help you write or update your will to reflect your wishes clearly, supporting both your family and the work you care about at SOAS.

If you would like to speak to someone about leaving a legacy to SOAS, please visit our website or contact us at philanthropy@soas.ac.uk. We would also be delighted to hear from you if you have already chosen to include SOAS in your will.



Regular giving

This year the revitalized regular giving programme marked a 43% increase in donor engagement. Wherever you direct your gift, you are helping strengthen the SOAS community and support real initiatives that make a difference to students, staff and resources on campus.



Giving November 2024

Giving November is our month-long celebration of generosity and scholarships at SOAS. With the support of alumni and friends from over 19 countries, £36,000 was raised to support scholarships. Every gift, no matter the size, goes a long way to ensure that talented students can access the transformative opportunity of a university education.

"My experience at SOAS has been invaluable to my development, not only in my academic life but also in my personal life. Being surrounded by people driven by their commitment to activism and social justice has been a constant inspiration."

Isabella Le Coutre Mauger, BA Linguistics,
Scholarship Recipient

Library Spring Appeal 2025

In April, we turned our attention to the SOAS Library, one of the UK's five National Research Libraries. Hundreds of gifts came in from alumni around the world, sharing their fond memories in the stacks, and supporting the university's initiative to preserve specialist knowledge on Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Thanks to generous philanthropic support, vital digitisation work has expanded access to our special collections for communities around the world. Your support ensures that our students thrive and that our Library continues to serve as a world-class resource.

Alumni engagement



● 16 ALUMNI GROUPS

- Ghana
- Saudi Arabia
- Los Angeles
- Nigeria
- Washington DC
- Hong Kong
- UAE
- Beijing
- Singapore
- London
- New York
- Geneva
- Mumbai
- Toronto
- Japan
- Berlin

- Nepal
- New Zealand
- Nigeria
- Norway
- Pakistan
- People's Republic of China
- Philippines
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Singapore (city state, but sovereign country)
- South Africa
- South Korea
- Spain
- Sudan
- Switzerland
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- Tunisia
- UAE
- Vietnam

● 118 ALUMNI AMBASSADORS IN 41 COUNTRIES

- Australia
- Bangladesh
- Belgium
- Brunei
- Canada
- Czech Republic
- Egypt
- France
- Germany
- Ghana
- Greece
- Hungary
- India
- Japan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kuwait
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Morocco

● EVENTS HELD IN 17 CITIES

- Berlin
- Casablanca
- Geneva
- Hong Kong
- Johannesburg
- Los Angeles
- London
- Malta
- New York
- Rabat
- San Francisco
- Singapore
- Taiwan
- Tokyo
- Toronto
- Washington DC

TOTAL NUMBER OF ALUMNI
77,629

NUMBER OF NEW ALUMNI 2024–25
3,123

33 EVENTS HOSTED BY ALUMNI GROUPS WELCOMED ABOUT **500** ALUMNI MEMBERS WORLDWIDE



Giving to SOAS

In this report, you have read about work that philanthropy has made possible at SOAS. Without the ongoing support of our alumni, friends and partners, we would not be able to have such an impact through our teaching, our research, and our students.

Our alumni change the world, whether that is in politics or law, development or academia, and so many other areas. We have highlighted some of the larger donations here, but every gift can make a difference to a student and to SOAS.

There are many ways you can support SOAS:

Make a gift today

soas.ac.uk/about/giving-soas

Leave a gift in your will

soas.ac.uk/about/giving-soas/leave-legacy

Talk to our philanthropy team about how you can make an impact

philanthropy@soas.ac.uk

Thank you to all of our donors for making a difference to SOAS and to the world.

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