

# Annual Report 2012/13

The world's leading institution  
for the study of Asia, Africa  
and the Middle East



# SOAS, University of London

SOAS was founded in 1916 as the School of Oriental Studies, becoming the School of Oriental and African Studies in 1938 to reflect its development and growth in regional expertise.

**We are now known as SOAS, University of London.**

## A global resource

World-class research and teaching expertise in politics, law, culture and society equips people for a global economy and multicultural society

## Research intensive

UK leader in the study of Asia; UK top 10 in most other subjects (RAE 2008); 6th in UK for academic reputation (*QS World University Rankings 2013*)

## Specialist and interdisciplinary strengths

350+ undergraduate degree combinations; 200+ postgraduate programmes (taught and distance learning) with a distinctive regional focus and global relevance. 6th in the UK and 26th in the world for Arts and Humanities (*THE World University Rankings 2013*), 10th in the UK for modern languages and 12th for politics and international studies (*QS World University Rankings 2013*)

## Intimate and ambitious

8th in UK for staff-student ratio (*Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide 2013*). 4th in London overall (*Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide 2014*, *Guardian University Guide 2013*)

## Satisfied students

89% of students satisfied with quality of teaching; 88% satisfied with overall experience; 88% satisfied with library and IT resources (*National Student Survey 2013*)

## First class facilities

One of only five National Research Libraries in the UK; 1.5 million volumes, periodicals and audiovisual materials in 400 languages, focusing on Asia, Africa and the Middle East

## Unrivalled range of non-European languages

All SOAS languages may be studied without prior knowledge. Language Entitlement Programme for all undergraduate students. 10th best in the UK for modern languages (*QS World University Rankings 2013*)

## The world meets at SOAS

- Over 5,500 students from 133 countries on campus
- 3,600 students around the world on distance learning programmes
- 32nd in the world for international faculty (*QS World University Rankings 2013*)
- 39,000 active alumni worldwide
- 8th highest percentage of international students in the world (*QS World University Rankings 2013*)

## In one of the world's great cities

A vibrant central London campus forms an intimate community at the heart of the university quarter of historic Bloomsbury, with the world renowned British Museum and the British Library close by

**The world's leading institution  
for the study of Asia, Africa  
and the Middle East**

# Our purpose

SOAS provides resources and knowledge about Asia, Africa and the Middle East to equip people for a global economy and a multicultural world.



At a time of accelerating change across Higher Education, SOAS continues to demonstrate its strength as the world's leading institution for the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

This year, we have made a further 23 appointments of distinguished academics to extend and deepen the knowledge and understanding of our regions and to lead our new cross-disciplinary powerhouses – the SOAS China Institute and the SOAS South Asia Institute. We have improved our teaching and learning in response to feedback from our students, launched a successful pilot summer school programme and taken bold steps to extend our vibrant campus in the heart of London through the 'SOAS into Senate House' project.

With our unique combination of language scholarship, disciplinary expertise and regional focus, SOAS aims to interpret and engage with the contemporary world. In 2012–13, we did just that, staging events such as Endangered Languages Week and conferences on topics such as sustainable agricultural development, education and gender, with exhibitions on, among other things, Sri Lanka and contemporary Malaysian textiles, paving the way for even greater impact in the coming years. We also prepared for the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the new system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. Publications, projects, impact case studies and developments in our research environment are all part of the evidence we will submit for evaluation in November 2013.

We continue to seek partnerships and collaborations to ensure that SOAS remains indispensable as an interpreter in a complex world.

Paul Webley

**Paul Webley**  
Director  
SOAS, University of London

Cover image:  
The Golden *Ruyi*  
(good-luck ornament):  
Reunion of the  
Eight Beauties  
(金如意八美图)

Artist, Shen Wenya  
(沈文雅)

Late 19th – early 20th  
century Chinese

woodblock print

Shanghai, Suzhou style

Height 29 cm,  
width 49.1 cm

SOAS Library (ref 39)



# Teaching and research

SOAS' teaching and research is constantly evolving, demonstrating our increasing importance and relevance to the world in the twenty-first century.

## Engaged with the present

The School is profoundly engaged with contemporary issues. For example, research in the Department of Development Studies is making a significant impact on the lives of people living in the poorest societies. Dr Laura Hammond and Dr Anna Lindley's investigation of diaspora groups and money transfer companies has opened up discussion among donors, UN agencies, international NGOs, local NGOs and diaspora members themselves about their role in processes of social change and development in Somalia. A high proportion of the population depends on money transferred from abroad for their basic living expenditure on food, education, and health care. Collaborating with the Indian Self-Employed Women's Association, Professor Guy Standing's unique pilot projects in rural villages in India have proved the value of basic income schemes, in which every individual resident receives a monthly cash grant, demonstrating significant positive effects on nutrition, health, education and production and economic activity.



Villagers benefit from income security during a pilot basic income scheme run by Guy Standing and SEWA

The human rights of displaced peoples draws on research strengths across SOAS' disciplines. At the invitation of Foreign Secretary William Hague, Professor Mashood Baderin, School of Law, has joined the Human Rights Advisory Group at the UK's Foreign Office. Research by Professor Richard Reid, Department of History, on the historical and current political dynamics in Eritrea and the Horn of Africa has influenced government policy. It has also proved indispensable to human rights advocates working in the region and to those in Europe, North America and beyond daily making decisions relating to the asylum claims of ethnic Eritreans.



Fidan Hajiyeva sings mugham in Azerbaijan as a result of a collaboration between BBC Radio 3's collaboration with SOAS Music Department's Lucy Durán for World Routes 2013  
Photo: Dr Lucy Durán

## Guardian of specialised knowledge

SOAS maintains unrivalled expertise in the languages, cultures and histories of the civilisations of its regions. This year a team led by Dr Friederike Lüpke, Department of Linguistics, secured Leverhulme funding of almost a million pounds to study multilingualism in a group of villages in Senegal, looking at social networks and the differences in language used in them. Dr Lucy Durán, Department of Music, teamed up with BBC Radio 3 for the 2013 World Routes Academy, providing talented young world music artists based in the UK with the chance to explore their musical roots by learning from and performing with a great musician from their country of origin. Dr Sarah Stewart, Department of the Study of Religions, brought together two hundred extraordinary artefacts to stage a ground-breaking public exhibition on the world's oldest monotheism, *The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in history and imagination*, in our Brunei Gallery.

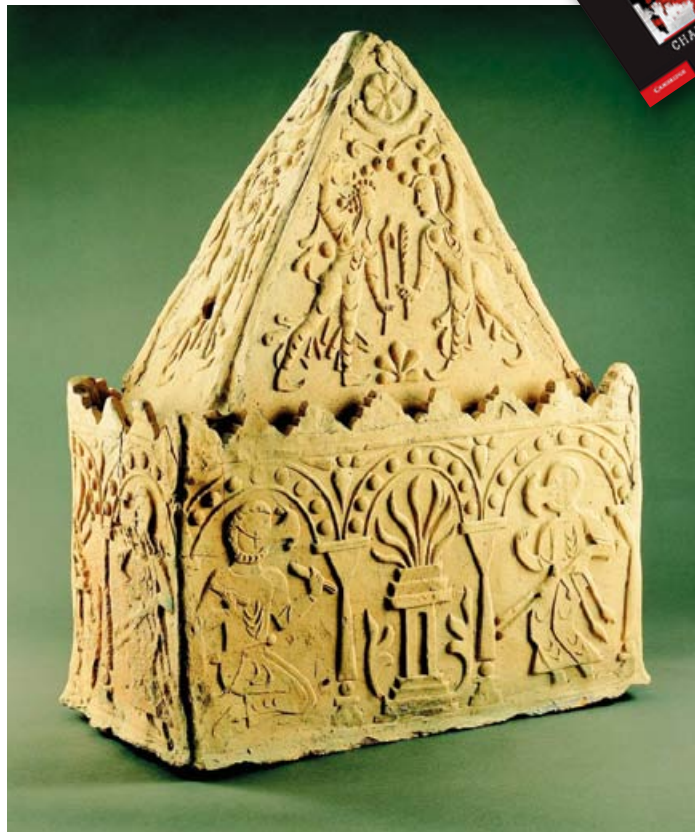
The impact of SOAS research is manifest in the wide range of publications, from research papers to articles and books



## Developing future scholarship

The launch of SOAS' Doctoral School at the start of the academic year brought unified oversight to the experience of our community of more than 600 research students. It enhanced our capacity to deliver advanced training and inter-disciplinary insights that are at the top of the list of research funding bodies' priorities. Working space for research was doubled with the opening of an entirely refurbished study centre in a listed Bloomsbury town house at 53 Gordon Square.

The Director's Prize for Teaching was awarded to Dr Kevin Manton, teacher of English for Academic Purposes and subject lecturer for SOAS' International Foundation Courses and English Language Studies (IFCELS). He was particularly commended for the strategies he adopted to help students become autonomous learners and develop techniques for critical learning.



## Interpreting complex issues

SOAS experts are frequently sought after to interpret world events as they occur. Professor Gilbert Achcar, Department of Development Studies, was interviewed extensively – in English, French and Arabic – on unrest in Egypt and Syria, Dr Marie Rodet, Department of History, gave context to the conflict in Mali, Dr Enze Han, Department of Politics and International Studies, gave expert comment on the elections in China last year, Dr Mike Jennings, Centre of African Studies, and Professor Stephen Chan, Department of Politics and International Studies, were called on for their all-round expertise on Africa, covering Nelson Mandela, the elections in Zimbabwe and Kenya, the withdrawal of Gambia from the Commonwealth, the acid attacks in Tanzania and al-Shabab in East Africa.

Culture and languages at SOAS are also getting increasing exposure, with Professor Michel Hockx, SOAS China Institute, providing insight into censorship and literature in China; Professor Anne Pauwels, Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Cultures, commenting on the importance of language learning and Dr Kit Davies commenting regularly on the arts.



Top left: 7th century Mullakurgan ossuary showing Zoroastrian priests in a fire temple  
Photo: Noshir Mulla

Above: Stacey Pierson, Department of the History of Art and Archaeology, gives a television interview on Chinese ceramics

## Meeting the needs of a changing world

Constant innovation keeps SOAS teaching and learning relevant and rewarding. Many of our new programmes – MA Media and the Middle East, BSc International Management, LLM Law and Gender and the Distance Learning Masters in Global Diplomacy – respond to political and social developments and the demand for specialist skills from the School's global community of students.

Once again, SOAS students proved the excellence of language and culture teaching, triumphing in the UK final of the Chinese Bridge Competition, a prestigious international contest in Chinese language and culture proficiency for non-native speakers, and winning first and second prize as well as the Lifestyle & Culture Research prize at the UK Japanese Speech Contest.



Students have unique opportunities to study and work in SOAS regions. This year, An-Najah National University in Nablus, Palestine, delivered highly effective and well-organised courses to the first cohort SOAS BA Arabic students to spend their year abroad at the institution. Students of the MA Anthropology of Tourism, Travel and Pilgrimage have been working to foster types of tourism which benefit directly rural communities. They participated in a conference in Addis Ababa to support Ethiopia's ambition to become the fifth most visited African tourism destination in the foreseeable future.



The Enterprise Office continues to prepare business people and diplomats for their work in Asia, Africa and the Middle East – this year clients included the Nike Foundation, Mitsubishi and BNP Paribas. Custom-made training programmes included a one-week programme on the Eurozone crisis for MBA students from Yonsei University in Korea, a course on Asian art for a group of Chinese art auctioneers and the three-week Executive Training Programme for Japan and Korea which prepared 45 executives from all over Europe to develop their business in Asia.

SOAS' pilot academic Summer School was very well received, welcoming over 40 students from 20 different countries on a number of three- to five-week courses. It will expand in 2014 to offer courses covering topics in politics, law, history, development and anthropology.



**Left:**  
SOAS launched a new distance learning Masters in Global Diplomacy

**Above:**  
A coffee shop in Addis Ababa: SOAS students have been helping to develop infrastructure to support sustainable tourism in Ethiopia  
*Photo: Geoffrey deVito*

**Top right:**  
An-Najah National University staged a ceremony to mark the graduation of their first cohort of SOAS BA Arabic students, who spent their year abroad in Palestine  
*Photo: An-Najah National University*

# Our community

SOAS is a national and international resource. We engage with our global community through our rich and extensive Library collections, through our publications and our public lectures, exhibitions and events and through our graduates, who go on from their studies with the skills and vision to make a difference in the world.



## Focusing on the student experience

Much work has gone into improving and developing the SOAS student experience. Through the National Student Survey our final year students have given us some very positive feedback. Satisfaction rates for the quality of our teaching stand at 89%, above the sector average, and overall student satisfaction rates are just a percentage point behind. In addition, 88% of our students said they were satisfied with access to both library and IT resources. To meet the challenge of providing quality, affordable accommodation in one of the world's best cities, we are working in partnership with the University of London Housing Service (ULHS) to develop university-managed housing through the Head Leasing scheme.



## Skills for enterprise and employability

Our Careers Service continues to extend internship and placement opportunities for SOAS students and recent graduates. The calibre of our students speaks for itself and a growing range of employers recognize SOAS as a valuable source of talent. Meanwhile, we are working closely with our academic colleagues to embed accredited placement structures in the curriculum. Our thriving partnership with Santander for the provision of paid internship opportunities continues to benefit students, recent graduates and employers alike.

Student Enterprise works with students to develop their business and innovation skills, for example, through the annual SOAS Enterprise Boot Camp. This year over 20 projects were established, including Wanderlust Gourmet Nut Butters, founded by undergraduates, which plans to employ and train unemployed women in London. The social enterprise, which makes flavoured nut butters, came second in a national enterprise competition. Also in 2013, Masters student Madison Salters won the £2,000 Provost's Prize in UCL's prestigious London Entrepreneurs' Challenge, as one of a student duo who developed a lightweight photo printer that clips on to the back of a mobile phone and prints wirelessly.

**Left:**  
Gamelan on the grass: students and staff celebrate World Music Day

**Top left:**  
We continue to improve the student experience  
*Photo: Madison Jayne Salters*

**Top right:**  
Student enterprise Wanderlust Gourmet Nut Butters came second in the UniPopshop national competition



## Helping more people to benefit from higher education

SOAS has a strong track record in raising the aspirations of people under-represented in higher education. One such initiative this year brought sixth formers from schools all over London to a conference on language studies. SOAS language students studying Japanese, Swahili and Hindi gave the sixth formers an insight into studying non-European languages at university level. The conference was part of SOAS' *Step-On: Achieving Success* programme which supports state school pupils who are either from the first generation in their families to apply for university or entitled to free school meals.

## Marking London 2012 Olympics

As the UK celebrated hosting the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Brunei Gallery marked the events with two exhibitions from our own collections, *The Man Who Wouldn't Run on a Sunday: Eric Liddell in the SOAS Archives* and *Gifts of Recognition*, an exhibition bringing to new audiences the School's rich but little known collection of modern and contemporary art.



**Above:**  
London sixth formers get a taste of university level study of non-European languages

**Left:**  
This 1925 portrait of Eric Liddell, shortly before leaving for China to become a missionary, featured in an exhibition about the Olympic gold-medal winner staged by SOAS Archives

## Recognising excellence

We honoured distinguished figures from the media and academia at our lively celebrations to mark the graduation of our students. The notable academics Sir Martin Harris (SOAS alumnus), Professor Jan Bremen and Professor Diane Eck (SOAS alumna) received Honorary Doctorates; renowned news journalist and SOAS alumna Desi Anwar became an Honorary Fellow; and the British comedian, actress and writer Meera Syal received an Honorary Doctorate.

Right:  
SOAS President  
Graça Machel

Below:  
Students celebrate  
their graduation



Graça Machel was appointed as the new President of SOAS from 1 August 2012. Mrs Machel is the Chancellor of the University of Capetown and is Chair of the Leadership Council for the Campaign to End Paediatric HIV/AIDS. Formerly Minister of Education and Culture in Mozambique, she is married to the former South African President Nelson Mandela.

Our annual volunteering awards recognise the amazing achievements of our students. Winning the award for best student-led volunteering project was Femin Ijtihad. Founded by LLM student Natasha Latiff, Femin Ijtihad is a pro bono initiative for women's rights, run by volunteers from SOAS and other universities. The group conducts legal research and offers training on women's rights under Islamic and international law. They have successfully developed a litigation model of gender-equitable Shariah-based arguments for Afghan lawyers which has resulted in lawyers successfully obtaining divorce for 36 cases of domestic abuse and reduced sentences for 17 cases of adultery and rape.

# Looking forward

SOAS celebrates its centenary in 2016/17. As we look back over 100 years of academic achievement, we are also looking to the future educational and research needs of our academic community.

## Degree awarding powers

From September 2013, degrees awarded by the School will be in the name of SOAS, University of London. Historically, SOAS has only been able to award degrees on behalf of the University of London. Degree Awarding Powers are granted by the Privy Council on the advice of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, the Government body charged with monitoring standards in higher education. The decision to grant SOAS degree awarding powers recognises not only the quality of teaching at the School but also its ability to set and maintain academic standards.

The redevelopment of the North Block of Senate House will help SOAS to play its role as a world-class institution

## Securing our future

In readiness for our centenary celebrations, we will consolidate our two campuses on one central site in Bloomsbury through the development of the North Block of Senate House. This will transform SOAS' ability to fulfil its academic vision and mission.

Not only will the North Block project bring all of our community onto a single vibrant campus in this prestigious London district of learning and heritage, it will also enable the planned increase by 35% of SOAS' student body and support initiatives like the new China and South Asia Institutes, which launch in the coming year. After wide consultation across SOAS, the design concept has been submitted for planning permission. Student experience is at the heart of the design, which will create a dynamic and social central hub, providing learning and teaching facilities fit for the twenty-first century and for our role as a world-class institution.



## Our supporters

Our sincere thanks go to all the individuals, trusts, foundations and organisations who have so generously supported us financially in 2012–13 and to those who give their time and expertise acting as ambassadors or advocates for our work.

We would particularly like to thank our major supporters, who are listed here, and those who have chosen to remain anonymous.

Your support gives us the freedom to explore new intellectual avenues, bring the best students and academic staff to SOAS and ensure that the School continues to make a positive impact on the world.

The Academy of Korean Studies  
Aequa Foundation  
HE Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber and the MBI Al Jaber Foundation  
Vahid Alaghband  
Cyrus Ala'i  
American Friends of SOAS  
Arcadia  
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Zarir Cama  
Cultures of Resistance Network Foundation  
Yashodhara Dalmia  
Malcolm Deboo  
Fereydoun Djam Charitable Trust  
The Farhangi Foundation  
The Felix Scholarship  
The Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust  
The Sir Joseph Hotung Charitable Settlement  
HSBC Holdings PLC  
Mo Ibrahim Foundation  
The Incorporated Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macau  
Celia M Johnson  
Farrokh K Kavarana  
The King Saud Foundation  
The Korea Foundation  
Meiji-Jingu (Shinto Shrine)  
Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation  
The Nohoudh Trust for Development Studies  
The Oak Foundation  
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