



Stockholm  
International  
School



Annual Review

2020/21

# Director's report

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A year of innovation. A year of achievement. A year of support.

If 2019/20 was the year that Covid-19 took us all by surprise, 2020/21 was the year that we learned to work in testing circumstances, yet continued to take our school forward. We continued to educate our students to the highest standards by using our capacity to adapt, to imagine and realise new ways of doing things, and to harness all the energy and enthusiasm of the SIS community to support each other in difficult times.

As you would expect of a school which lists challenge and preparedness as being among its core values, the school has not been standing still during the pandemic. Every aspect of school life progressed during this year.

In teaching, Positive Discipline became part of our method, distance learning became essential to the teaching and study experience, and we launched our first Tech Fest. In June of 2021, the board made the decision to transition from International Primary Curriculum (IPC) to the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP), a significant decision that means we will become an IB school throughout our grades.

Our community spirit was enhanced by the development and launch of an award-winning house system, we launched welcome events before the start of term to help integrate new families, and the use of resources from our annual fund – the SIS Spirit Fund – helped further develop our Makerspace learning and other activities.

And in planning for the future we developed our new Strategic Plan for 2021—2024, created an intranet system for staff, systematised our professional development, and secured additional campus space to meet increasing demand.

This is not a school that has paused during the pandemic.

You can read more about all these in this review. One common thread runs through them all: the passion, commitment, and resourcefulness of our Board of Trustees, leadership, all our staff, families, and students. I am proud to have you as colleagues and I look forward to the year ahead confident that SIS will continue to thrive and make its mark in the city and impact the future prospects of our students.

María Isabel (Marisa) León  
Director of SIS



# The view from the Board

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When we encounter great obstacles in life we have to draw upon our own inner strength in order to surmount them. But often that would not be enough without the support, encouragement, and guidance of our friends and family.

Similarly, in our School, the Senior Leadership Team have demonstrated their strength and resolve in abundance during a challenging year, and the Board of Trustees has been there to be a friend, guide, and mentor to them. We're there to share our knowledge and experience, to provide input and opinion on decisions to be taken, and to ensure the School is steering a safe course that is in keeping with its mission and values.

We're also there to guarantee the long-term interests of our School. In that respect I am delighted how the current leadership has maintained high standards of excellence in the classroom. In June 2021 we approved the recommendation that the School move to teaching the IB Primary Years Programme, making us a wholly IB-driven school, from Early Years right through grade 12. This can only add to our appeal for the internationally mobile families that we serve, and help our growth and development.

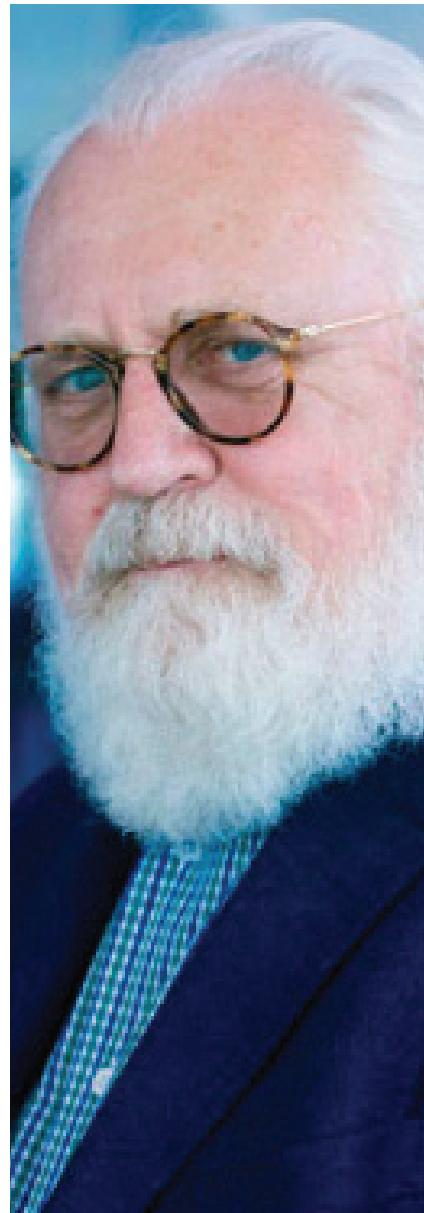
The trustees are also there to ensure the prudent management of the School funds in order to guarantee its financial sustainability in the long term. Allied to this is the strategic development of our campus and the acquisition of premises suited to our expansion and future growth, which demands due diligence and careful planning.

The Strategic Plan review that was started in early 2021 has been an exciting opportunity for the School to examine its strengths and weaknesses, to look into the future, and evaluate our readiness to respond to new demands in education and society at large. The involvement and commitment made by so many members of our community was impressive, and the output a testament to the thought and dedication that went into the project. I look forward to seeing the positive impact in School life over the next three years.

Recognising the professionalism and commitment shown by our leadership teams, I am not in the least surprised that despite all that 20/21 brought to their door the School has continued to prosper academically and demand for places has increased.

I am delighted that the initiatives of Marisa León, in her first two years as Director, created a resilient and resourceful management team to steer the School steadily in the troubled waters of the 20/21 year.

Lage Jonason  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees



# Governance

## THE LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Two teams manage the operational aspects of the School's curriculum management, development, and administration.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT), headed by the Director, forms a close working unit that formulates strategy and guides the school through day-to-day processes.

The Educational Leadership Team (ELT), also led by the Director, collaborates and focuses on bringing teaching and learning to the highest levels throughout the school.

The 2020/21 teams are shown below.

 <p>Annica Wård Business Manager</p>	 <p>María Isabel León Director</p>	 <p>David Osler Primary School Principal and Deputy Director</p>	 <p>Michael Moore Middle School Principal</p>	 <p>Bradley Lister MYP Coordinator</p>	 <p>Sandra Loureiro Head of Technology</p>
 <p>Emma Jones Advancement Director</p>	 <p>Christine Öman Upper School Principal</p>	 <p>Gunjit Sethi Dean of Students</p>	 <p>Noola Boyaci Head of Learning and IPC Coordinator</p>	 <p>Jarno Ampuja DP Coordinator</p>	<b>EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM</b>
<b>SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM</b>					

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2020/21

As a not-for-profit Foundation, the School is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board oversees the management of the School and provides strategic direction. The Board is self-perpetuating. Trustees serve without remuneration, normally for a period of 5–10 years, ensuring institutional memory and accumulated experience.



# Financials

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Rigorous financial discipline is central to the sustainability and future development of the School. As a not-for-profit foundation SIS is not setting out to generate dividends for shareholders, rather, any surplus is reinvested back into the School. SIS own the building on Johannesgatan, which is a solid asset, and has no long-term debt, which leaves it well positioned to meet future challenges.

## REVENUE

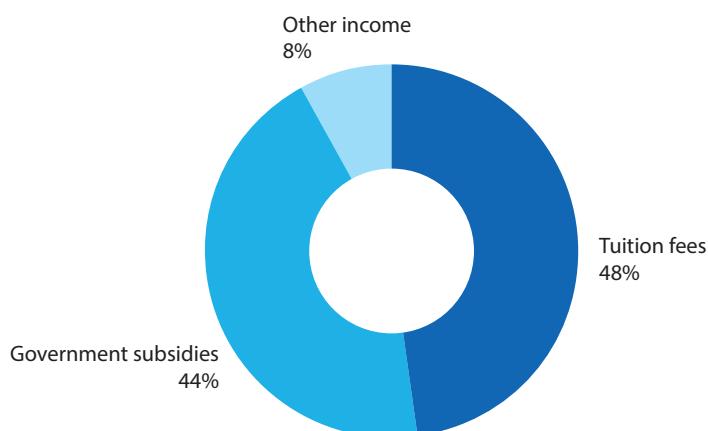
Year-on-year revenue continued to grow during 2020/21. Coupled with careful management of expenses, the year showed a modest surplus which in keeping with the our Foundation status will be reinvested in the School's educational mission.



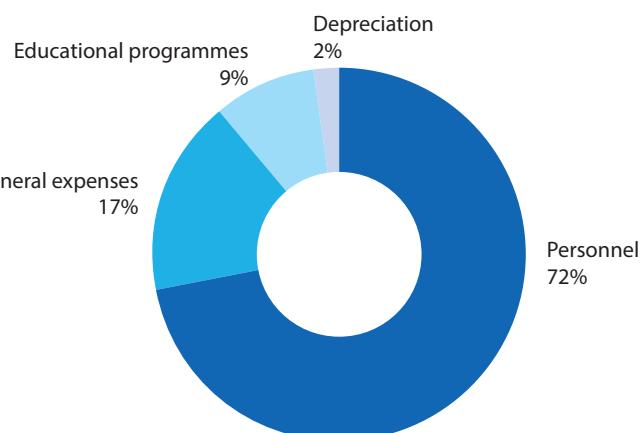
## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The 2020/21 year produced a surplus of income over expenditure of 12.7m SEK for reinvestment in the School.

Summary of Income



Summary of Expenses

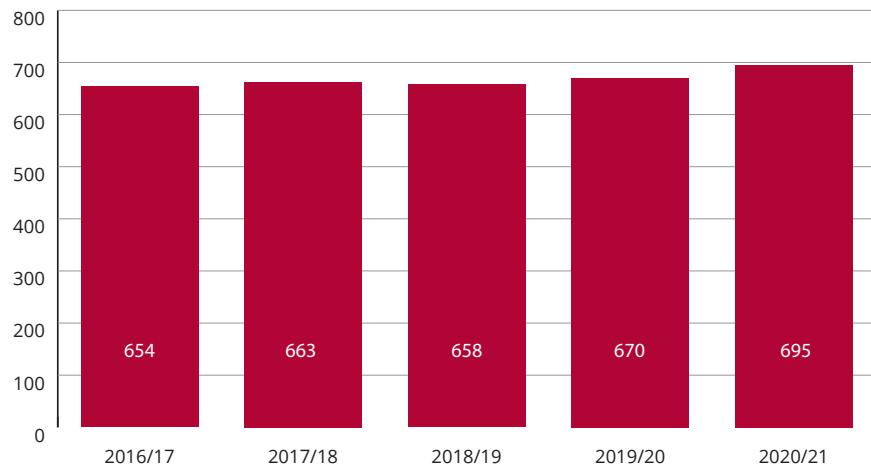


# Our students

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## ENROLLMENT

Despite the pandemic constraining global mobility, applications increased in 2020/21. Consequently, the number of enrolled students in the school increased too, supported by the acquisition of additional campus space.



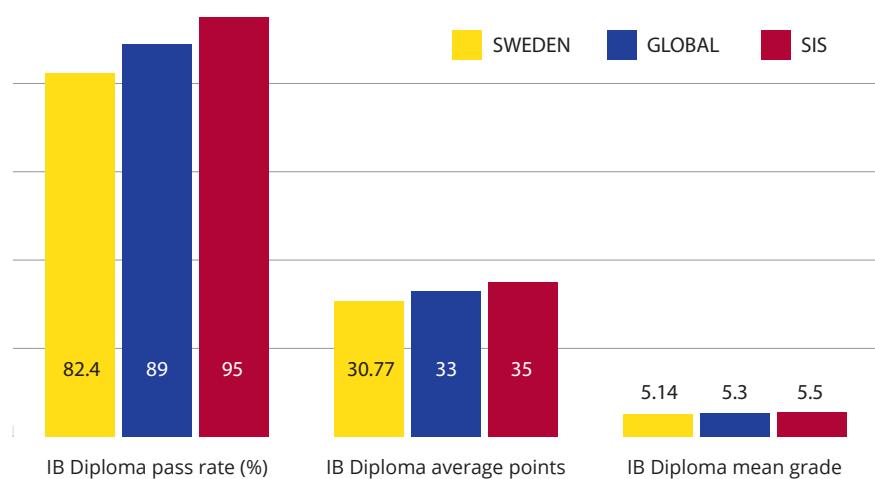
## NATIONALITIES

In 2020/21 our students represented 58 different countries – a truly global reach.



## IB RESULTS

Our students exceed both national and global averages in the IB Diploma Programme



# Our community

## FAMILY MATTERS

When life gets hard many of us turn to our families for support, and the SIS family rose to the occasion in 2020/21. Our community has always benefited from the support of our parents and guardians, but this year was exceptional. As well as sustaining existing involvement with the School, new initiatives were developed to welcome incoming families and help them orientate around the School and Stockholm city. A buddy programme was involved to help students make friends and feel comfortable in their new environment when so much face-to-face interaction was necessarily constrained.

And it was the tireless work of the PTA in these trying circumstances that gave rise to some reflection and revision of its role. SIS places enormous value on the feedback and original thinking of our families, and having a forum where those ideas can be shared and discussed. That had been the PTA, but life in 2020/21 led to a re-examination of its role and how it could best address the needs of the School community.

As a result, the PTA rebranded as the SIS Parent Community (SPC). This was more than

just a name change – it recognised the primary role of the organisation to serve the needs of a largely transient population of parents, guardians, and wider families rather than more settled groups. The new structure allows the SPC to focus on the wide range of issues that affect most families at the School.

The School remains heavily engaged with the SPC – supporting the development of its new visual identity and promoting its activities – and recognises it as an integral part of SIS life..

The PTA/SPC Committee in 2020/21 comprised:

Johanna Hajman  
Neil Walker  
Claude Kelly  
Mitchell Smolkin  
Rowena Lee



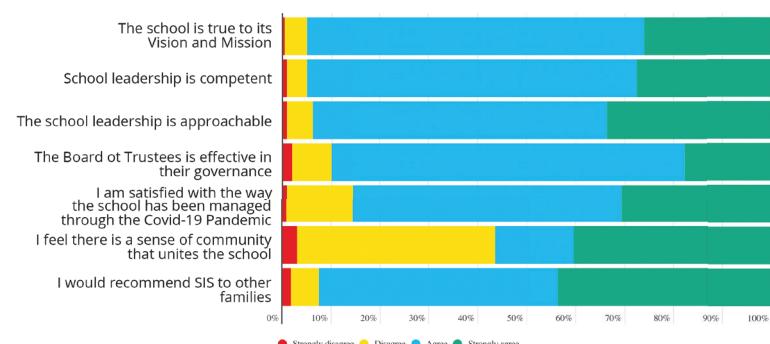
## YOU'RE WELCOME

Our first Welcome (Back) event , organised jointly with the SPC, took place at the start of the 2020/21 school year. It was a chance for parents and guardians, either new to the school or returning, to visit, meet staff members and ask questions. Our students also got the chance to meet new classmates. The sun was shining and a food truck kept everyone well fed during the day. Due to Covid concerns the day had to be tightly managed, but visitors respected their slot times and were wonderfully flexible. With everyone's cooperation, the day was a great success and a great introduction to SIS!

## LISTENING TO OUR FAMILIES

Every year, SIS conducts a survey of parents and guardians to discover their perceptions of the School and how they rate its strengths and weaknesses. This structured, quantifiable approach highlights the levels of satisfaction in our community and helps to inform decision making when planning for the future. In 2020/21 – a challenging year on so many fronts – the survey showed our community to be largely enthusiastic about the School's vision and mission, and its leadership. Perhaps not surprisingly, the response to the Covid-19 pandemic gave rise to most differences of opinion, though 75% still agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the School's response.

### SIS Parent/Guardian Survey June 2021



### Some survey comments...

“ I deeply appreciate the transparency in decision making and leaderships' communication skills.

“ Every staff member of the school is very approachable and ready to answer parents. They try to solve our issue or direct us to the concerned person.

“ I loved being a part of a very international and diverse community in Stockholm. The 5th and 6th grade teachers this year have all been exceptional.

# Student life and Covid

The resilience of our young people is quite remarkable. Despite all the challenges that arose from the impact of Covid-19, our students continued to thrive through a combination of creativity, resourcefulness and downright hard work.

## MAKING A MARK IN NEPAL

SIS students have been working on the Nepal Project since 2014. Every year students have visited the Shila Devi primary school in Dhoksan, and SIS has supported the school with donations of uniforms, solar panels, textbooks and supplies, as well as paying the salary of two teachers. The project is not funded from the school budget, but relies on its own fundraising and support from the SIS Spirit Fund.

The trip to Nepal in the 2020/21 had been cancelled when the impact of Covid-19 first appeared, but our students were not to let that dampen their enthusiasm and dedication to supporting the cause. While the usual sponsored run had to be cancelled due to Covid restrictions, students, parents and staff did some lateral thinking and took to two wheels for a virtual cycling challenge. This raised an impressive 30,000 SEK, to help sustain the SIS Nepal Project through a very testing year.



## ERASMUS+

Although the pandemic didn't stop Erasmus+ project work, it did constrain mobility, which meant SIS missed out on hosting other schools in 2020/21. The switch to digital brought rewards and raised awareness among participants. One difference highlighted was the fact that three out of the six schools involved in one session didn't have laptops. It demonstrated in very practical terms that even though we're all in Europe, we're not all the same. Some students in the participating groups had not been able to attend school at all.

## DIGITAL MODEL

The Model UN programme at SIS also had to adapt to the impact of Covid-19. Where visits to other locations and receiving visitors at SIS had been so much part of the programme, 2020/21 saw students necessarily turn to digital channels to sustain their activities. The challenges were global, with some countries shutting schools and instigating lockdowns. However, the SIS participants showed resourcefulness and commitment, sustaining a level of involvement that carries on the long tradition of the Model UN programme in the School, and augurs well for participation in future years.

## STILL DREAMING

A choir is the very definition of togetherness: working in vocal unison to harmonise, counterpoint, and blend together to make a 'beautiful noise'. So the SIS junior choir wasn't going to let Covid get in the way when they were invited to appear in a Dutch TV special about ABBA. They were asked to recreate the sound of the backing choir on 'I have a dream' originally released almost 40 years ago.

Under the watchful guidance of SIS Choir Director Kimberley Akester, and SIS Drama Teacher Anneli Thompson, 14 junior choir members made their way to Nalen for the recording. True to form, they did justice to their predecessors and wore their SIS T-shirts with pride as they had a day out to remember.



# House builders



No sorting hat may have been available, but August 2020 saw all our students and staff assigned to Earth, Fire, Air, and Water – the four houses that come together to form the new SIS ‘House’ system.

The House system nurtures a sense of community and identity within the school, and encourages belonging and intermingling across age groups. The ‘elemental’ houses emphasise individual qualities but relate to each other as part of a greater single identity, releasing their true strength when they come together to form one larger, powerful environment. The elements also capture the essence

of the Swedish landscape to which SIS belongs, emphasising the beauty and power of nature. The theme was the result of sessions with students and others, exploring possibilities, discussing the options, and working towards the preferred outcome.

SIS Director Marisa León led a launch event where each student and staff member received an envelope in which was revealed the House they would belong to, along with an identifying wristband and gift. Immediately after the launch followed a session of activities and brain-teasers in the first ever SIS House exercise.

## CASE PROVEN

The thinking underpinning the house system was brilliantly conceptualised by graphic designer Beth Elzer, who created four powerful graphics in a distinctive style with a joyous colour palette. Each one stands strongly on its own, but they merge to form one composite, panoramic landscape.

This ingenuity, and the overall strategy for the House system, caught the eye of the judges in the CASE (Council for Advancement in Support of Education) Awards, who presented a Bronze commendation to the SIS creation. Making the Award to SIS Advancement Director Emma Jones, the CASE judges remarked on the project; ‘We found this to be a lovely campaign. It is age-appropriate, colourful, and fun. It enhances a sense of belonging and adventure.’

SIS won the award in the company of prestigious institutions such as the universities of Princeton and Syracuse, and stood out among 3,000 entries from 27 countries.



## WISE OWL

The landscape created by our new House system graphics soon had a new element, as our school mascot Olli the Owl proudly flew through the air across its rivers, woodlands, and warming fires. Olli made his debut towards the end of the previous year, but wasn’t named until a little later, with students taking part in a naming competition.

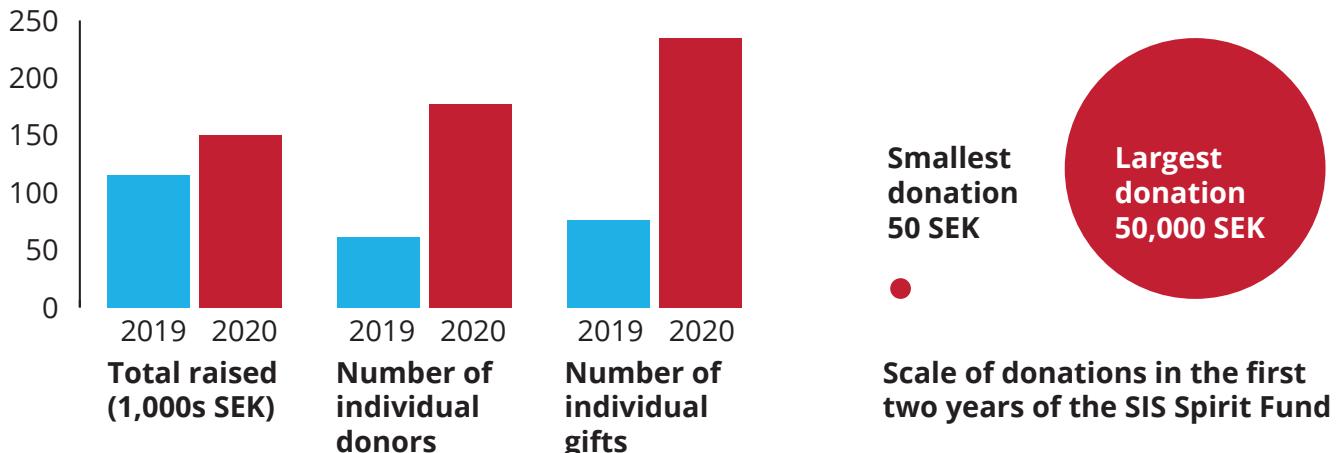


The wise young bird has proved a popular mascot in 2020/21, appearing on a range of school sports wear and other merchandise and even making the occasional personal appearance!

# Our supporters

It's a wonderful reflection of the affection people feel for the School that we have an energetic and imaginative SIS Parent Community, an enthusiastic roster of volunteers, and donors who contribute generously to our annual fund. In 2020/21 their support was more valuable than ever and made a real impact on the School.

## THE SIS SPIRIT FUND



Launched in 2019, the SIS Spirit Fund moved forward in 2020/21. It attracted more donors and raised more in donations than in its founding year. The Spirit Fund supports academic excellence, innovation, and campus improvement, and we began to see this reflected in the projects it supported during the year, and the impact they have had.

The Nepal project has sustained support for the Shila Devi primary school in Nepal, funding materials, textbooks, and the salaries of two teachers. Makerspace learning has been enhanced, encouraging independent thinking and problem solving among our students. Performances at SIS, by the Choir and others, have benefited from investment in new lighting to give them a professional glow.

## MAKERSPACE



Technology Integrator Mmamothabi Tlailane and Library Media Specialist Katalin Pongo led the way in introducing Makerspaces to SIS. On the surface, the concept is deceptively simple: provide a broad set of tools and put them in a space that serves as a gathering point for projects, expertise, and mentoring. Then place the emphasis on the making rather than the space.

In the SIS Makerspace students can design, build, and create; collaborate, investigate and problem solve. It helps students be more resourceful and encourages inventive thinking and independent learning. It enriches the learning environment for the whole School and the SIS Spirit Fund was instrumental in making it happen.



## GETTING A MOVE ON

It would normally be an occasion for a community get-together full of fun, but of necessity a major fundraising event in 2020/21 had to be run virtually. Literally; run. Or walked, or jogged, or hopped if you felt inclined.

Get Moving for SIS caught the imagination of 320 willing souls who got to their feet and went out to raise money for the SIS Spirit Fund.

Over 30,000 SEK was raised and as far as we are aware, no muscles or tendons were damaged in the process!

# Donors and volunteers

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Stockholm International School would like to acknowledge and thank the donors and volunteers who gave so generously to support the School during the 2020/21 school year. Your donations to the SIS Spirit Fund allow us to support academic excellence, provide extraordinary experiences, and enhance our campus facilities for the benefit of our students. The time, energy and expertise volunteered helps build and strengthen our community. We thank each and every one of you.

## DONORS

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Munira Abu Shaibah	Delyana Glover	Linda Karlsson Engdahl	Evi Markou	Fredrik Sand
Miguel Aguado Orduna	Krassi Gormley	Harshad Katpatal	Enrique Martin	Ariadne Schenk-Hogenboom
Bea Åkerlund	Judith Gough	Farnaz Kazemi	Itaru Masuoka	Linda Seber
Carmen Andries	Andrea Grahe	Sarah Margaret Kerwin	Vatroslav Mateljic	Gunjit K Sethi
Radostina Angelova	Melanie Gramm	Dan Keyworth	Philip McCrea	Kiran Shah
Deborah Archer	Katarina Gröndal	Fehim Khan	Johan McCurdy	Gunwant Singh
Eillene Archer	Sara Gullberg	Elena Kim	Catherine McNulty	Reema Singh
Charl Bassil	Su Ling Gyr	Daniel Kjellgren	Björn Melin	Sathish Sivanandam
Luigi Biondi	Johanna Hajman	Terry Kleinsmith	Maja Milanovic	Samantha Skovmand
Ilhem Bouroucha	Sofie I Hallberg	Mitesh Kumar	Laura Miller	Jan Ståhlberg
Thorsten Brandt	Catharina Hallin	Charlotte Lado Naess	Catherine Miller	Filip Standaert
Amena Briët	Severine Hamre	Andrew Laing	Carl Molinder	Demetra Stellas
Mattias N Byström	Lotta Hansman	Lesley Lanefelt	Susanne Molinder	Annika Sten Pärson
Rossana Cazzato	Åsa Hansson	Monika Lanz	Michael Moore	Carina Strömbärg
Didric Cederholm	Marina Hardy	Ellen Larsson	Fernando Morell	Johanna Sundblad
Lucia Celentano	Tatjana Lin Hascher	Peter Larsson	Danielle Mossburg	Ryan Sweeney
Melis Ceritoglu	Rieko Hayashi	Rowena Lee	Henrik Nordvall	Sylwia Szymanska-Smolkin
Kevin Conrad	Cecilia Hedenberg	Mirjam Lehtonen-Biefer	Michael O'Dwyer	Dwayne Thompson
Genoveffa Corbo	Isabelle Hellevik Nordlund	Maria Isabel León	Jan Ögren	Mmamothabi Tlailane
Csaba Cseresnyes	Annika Henningsson	Xavier Leroi	Sabine Ohnemueler	Jennie Tonnby Bark-jones
Estelle Darrigade	Angie Horne	Karin Lewerth	Lidia Oshlyansky	Eric Tremont
Juliana de Almeida e Silva	Maryann Horne	Peng Li	David Osler	Corine Troncy
Félix De Pablo	Ke Hu	Kyriaki Liadaki	Ardiana Osmani	Christina Turner
Marina Di Camillo	Erika Hultin Feola	Lieven R Libbrecht	Isaac Pineus	Anja Van Rossum
Kathleen Donachie	Motria Jaremko	Angelica Liljeval	Katalin Pongo	Angela Vlaskamp - ten Berge
Robert Dranitzke	Meeta Jassal	Katie Linehan	Liisa Raasakka Gaudet	Annica Wård
Anna Elenius	Nitya Jayaram-Lindström	Philippa Logan	Juana Roca	Elaine Weidman Grunewald
Roberta Ellingsen	Andrew Jenks	Tatiana Löttiger	Marianne Røder Lauridsen	Samantha Wilson
Chiara Fidone	Jenny Johannesson	Sandra I Loureiro	Gaylene Roets	Lyn Wraneus
Marie-Kim Findeling Godard	Lage Jonason	Sofia Anna-Maria Lund	Bradley Roets	Sandra Young Nilsson
Jonathan Foster	Emma K Jones	Sara Lundvall	Sara Roller Mateljic	Jennie Zachrisson
Charmaine Fourie	Karen Jones	Birgitta Lustig	Lori E Rubottom	Leyi Zeng
Arthur French	Anuradha Kakar	Jeanna Ma	Otto Ruijs	Haifang Zhang
Ida C Friberg	Andriy Kalayda	Adiba Mango	Paushali Saha	
Farrah Gillani	Anders Karlsson	Senthilkumar Mani	Johanna Sällvin	

## VOLUNTEERS

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Carmen Andries	Marisa Fabrega	Kirthiga Lakshmi	Sarah Pastore	Beth Tech
Christian Barth	Mariya Furuhara	Rowena Lee	Cecilia Rasile	Andrea Ullrich
Dominique Bassil	Michal Ginzburg	Hilde Lenaerts	Vanessa Rodriguez	Kaisa Valiviita
Reema Singh Batra	Andrea Grahe	Jeanna Ma	Mary Sandell	Jelena Valova
Amena Briët	Berna Guven	Laurel Martin	Roza Sarrafian	Aenni van Rossum
Genevieve Clune	Johanna Hajman	Maja Milanovic	Vandana Sehgal	Anuradha Vidhani
Cecilia Dahlback	Iida Kaivonen	Danielle Mossburg	Mitchell Smolkin	Neil Walker
Estelle Darrigade	Claude Kelly	Kristen Munro	Birgitta Söderström	Ayako Westphal
Ellis de Bruin	Nupur Khanna	Nazli Paker Igaz	Annika Sucksdorff	Pia von Weymarn
Tatibha Dunn	Elena Kim	Magda Parteli	Lily Sun	Lyn Wraneus

# Celebrating our staff



## ABOVE AND BEYOND...

A school relies on the dedication of its staff at the best of times, but 2020/21 it is true to say that our staff excelled themselves. Despite an unprecedented disruption in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic, the staff maintained a viable, functioning school, serving the needs of our students, and allowing them to continue their education.

Adapting to the challenge meant changes in logistical organisation, the rapid acquisition of new digital skills, and the reprofiling of lessons to make them suitable for online delivery and remote learning.

In the upper school, exam-aware students were unable to take face-to-face classes for some weeks, but by adapting to the online environment teaching was sustained and our students equipped to succeed in achieving their academic targets.

In middle school, a system of toggling provided alternate weeks of in-class and distance learning, maintaining the personal contact and mentoring during this crucial period of schooling.

And in the Primary school and early years, although the school remained open, teachers responded to the new needs around hygiene and safety practices, with discipline and commitment.

It was not only in the classroom that staff rose to the challenge. From the maintenance of the building, to catering, to providing IT support, to managing personnel requirements, and communicating advice on safety and good practice – and all the other day-to-day activities we take for granted – the whole school pulled together for the benefit of our students.

In such exceptional circumstances it's good to know that our students appreciated how the staff responded and supported them. In the end of year student survey more than two thirds of students in grades 8-12 agreed or strongly agreed when asked if they were happy with the support received from teachers on distance learning, rising to over 90% of grade 6 and 7 students.

With the pandemic likely to endure, the school can be reassured that the willingness to pull together shown by staff, in the most demanding of years, will see it well positioned to respond and continue to achieve success.



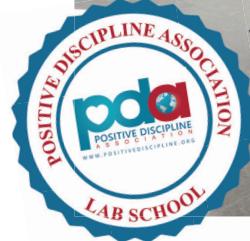
## AWARD WINNER

SIS teacher and Subject Leader Laura van Halewijn-Chuquimia was named as recipient of the Promotion of International Education Award from the Educational Collaborative of International Schools.

The award recognises individuals in the international school community who are actively involved in promoting international education.

Laura has travelled widely in Latin America, and began her teaching career in her native Netherlands. She has been at SIS since 2008 as a Spanish and Dutch teacher, and is also Subject Leader of the Language Acquisition Swedish, French and Spanish Department Middle and Upper School programmes.

# Teaching and learning



## BE POSITIVE

New people bring new thinking. Middle school Principal, Michael Moore, arrived at SIS in 2019, and set out to support teachers and students by further developing the mindset for learning within the School. Having recently become familiar with the concept of Positive Discipline through a workshop in London, he saw its introduction to SIS as having clear benefits for the teaching and learning experience.

Positive Discipline (PD) focuses on student well-being, particularly appropriate in middle school where students are rapidly experiencing many life changes, but equally valid across all ages. It sets limits and fosters mutual respect in the teaching context. Joy Marchese, a leading practitioner that Michael invited to the school to introduce PD to the staff, describes it as being 'firm and kind at the same time'.

## CURRICULUM MATTERS

Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, one major highlight of 2020/21 was the completion of our two year curriculum review. This process involved an in depth analysis of the International Primary Curriculum and the changes proposed in its updated version. We also examined the IB's Primary Years Programme. Teachers attended a "Making the PYP happen" course and several groups visited PYP schools within our Nordic Network of International Schools.

Throughout this process, we used the school's mission, values and definition of learning as the lenses in

which to critically evaluate the curriculum to determine what we felt would best meet the needs of our students, their families and our talented teachers. The result was a recommendation to the Board of the School to transition back to the PYP.

In the Spring of 2021 the Board accepted our recommendation. The Primary school will now begin the process of transitioning to the PYP.

Adopting the IB PYP will benefit both students and teachers. Students will be

following an established and widely-recognised programme used in over 100 countries across the globe. They will be prepared to make a smooth transition to the Middle Years IB Programme either at SIS or internationally. For teachers, the shift means they benefit from a common terminology and methodology throughout their students' learning journey.

Adopting PYP will help to future proof the school, giving it the broadest possible appeal and ability to respond to the increasing demand for international schooling in Stockholm and the region.





# Stockholm International School

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