



# The IGA: the “right formula” for addressing global challenges

**An alumnus and Visiting Senior Fellow has pledged his support for the School’s attempts to address the increasing challenges of globalisation, through a significant unrestricted gift for the Global Policy Lab in the Institute of Global Affairs (IGA).**

Since graduating in 1990 Duncan Clark OBE has gone on to serve as Chairman of the British Chamber of Commerce in China, and founded BDA China, a leading investment advisory firm that comprises almost 100 professionals in Beijing. In 2013 he was awarded an OBE for services to UK-China trade and investment, and his recent book, *Alibaba: The House That Jack Ma Built*, was shortlisted for 2016’s Financial Times/McKinsey Business Book of the Year Award.

Now he believes the IGA’s Global Policy Lab is the right place to explore many of the most pressing global debates, whether those concerning migration, the environment, financial regulation, or the impact of technology, in order to provide an ‘antidote’ to the current wave of populism and autarky.

“We find ourselves in a time when the concept of globalisation has been called into question,” he said. “While its net impact has been positive, not least in lifting hundreds of millions of people in Asia out of poverty, the benefits clearly have not been evenly spread. Professor Erik Berglöf [Director of the IGA] has diagnosed the key strains and solutions in this debate, and I am convinced that the IGA’s commitment to harnessing the talent of existing academics at the School, while reaching out to a range of international institutions and governments, is the right formula.”

His faith in the rigorous manner in which LSE would approach these vast topics dates back to his time as a student studying Economic History at the School. He said: “I relished the ability

to study comparative economic development in a diverse range of countries, providing me with a solid grounding for understanding the complex and fast-changing economic system I was to experience in China. ‘To know the causes of things’ succinctly sums up the School’s spirit of inquiry and independent thinking, and this has served me well as I have tried to make sense of the momentous changes I have experienced here over the past two decades.”

As such, Duncan has no inclination to place restrictions on how the IGA should utilise his gift. “From my experience as an investor and an entrepreneur, and from my study of companies like Alibaba, I have learned one key thing: the best route to success is through a ‘no strings attached’ approach, whereby one backs the best people and lets them get on with it,” he said. “I know Professor Berglöf and the IGA will know how best to identify and support the best researchers at LSE, and identify the best external partners. While I am happy to support this activity through funding, perhaps I will be more important in making introductions to people who can make a bigger difference than me.”

He added: “I hope my gift can help the IGA to demonstrate its capabilities to those who can be rallied to the cause and help fund its growth in the years to come. Seeing the calibre of the research and people already involved, I’m convinced it is well positioned to achieve that.”

This latest gift further enhances Duncan’s relationship with LSE, which as well as being academic and philanthropic, has also touched upon his professional life. “I remember how helpful the LSE Careers service was in providing assistance after graduation,” he recalls. “I soon embarked on a career at Morgan Stanley, and within a few years I was recruiting a new generation of talent myself, including from LSE. Fast forward to today and my advisory firm employs a number of Chinese professionals who studied at LSE. I have also helped to re-establish the School’s Chinese alumni network and sponsored its first careers fair in China, so I’m thrilled to be embarking on a new journey and helping to further deepen this connection.”

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Duncan Clark OBE (BSc Economic History 1990)

