



Mitrany
Alumni Network IRIO Groningen



**Documents for the General Members Meeting
of 8 April 2017**



Dear Alumni,

The Mitrany board 2016-2017 hereby invites you to the annual General Members Meeting (GMM) of the Mitrany Alumni Network IRIO. In contrast to previous years, the meeting will take place digitally. We appreciate that you are taking the time to participate in the GMM and we invite you to send your comments and questions to mitrany@rug.nl.

The format was changed to a digital GMM in order to allow a larger share of our members to have the opportunity to inquire about the network and its activities as well as to share with us their ideas and input for future activities. Since our members are geographically dispersed among many different cities inside and outside the Netherlands we hope this format will give more people the opportunity to provide us with feedback on the network and its activities, as well as the policy of the Mitrany Board 2016-2017. Moreover, we would like to use the opportunity to officially announce a change to our Audit Committee (for more information please see annex 4).

We ask you kindly to send us your question and comments until **21 April 2017** using the **subject line GMM** and we will aim to reply to each question within two weeks.

We also invite you to join our next drinks!

Groningen: 19 April 2017

Brussels: 25 April 2017

The Hague: 2 June 2017

The Mitrany board 2016-2017 is looking forward to receiving your comments.

Best regards,

Meike Korff - Chairwoman

Claire Defossez - Secretary

Wouter Kuin - Treasurer

Camiel Fremouw - PR & Communication

Dyonne Niehof - External Affairs & Events

Esmée Ramaaker - Clio Board Representative

Dr. Christopher Lamont - Staff Representative

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Executive Summary – year report 2016-2017

After having taken stock of the situation that the Mitrany Alumni Network IRIO was in and following the advice of our predecessors, the current board 2016-2017 decided to rethink the activities that the network can offer to its Alumni. Given that over the last couple of years Mitrany faced relatively low alumni engagement and little continuity in its work the current board decided to focus on one main goal, namely, to increase participation through bottom-up activities in order to establish and grow the network. In this context, the board has formulated a strategy indicating three priorities for 2016/2017. The outcomes of this strategy are:

Firstly, the establishment of local circles in different cities which at this moment include The Hague, Brussels and Groningen. These local circles are currently headed by either a local Alumni Ambassador who supports the board or a board member as in the case of The Hague. Since August 2016 in total five drinks were organised in The Hague (every first Friday of the month), three in Brussels (every two months) and one in Groningen (monthly drinks).

Secondly, the engagement with new graduates was further enhanced through the organisation of a graduation ceremony held in November 2016 and through enhanced cooperation with the Student Association Clio, in particular with regard to the Alumni-mentorship programme.

Lastly, overall communication with alumni was further improved through a number of activities including an update of the Mitrany website and the distribution of the first bi-annual Mitrany newsletter in January 2017. Additionally, outreach to alumni was increased through messaging via the Mitrany Facebook website, LinkedIn and emails.

Moreover, with regard to the financial situation Mitrany managed to change the system of reimbursement with the University of Groningen and received all funds on Mitrany's bank account. Additionally, the board managed to organise a number of events on a zero-cost basis which improved the overall financial situation of the network.

Following these achievements, the board 2016/2017 seeks to ensure a good transition to the next board and hopes that Mitrany will continue to grow its alumni network and its activities.

Should you be interested in becoming an Alumni Ambassador in your city or a board member for the period 2017/2018 please send us an email to mitrany@rug.nl using either the subject line Alumni Ambassador or board member 2017/2018.

Mitrany Strategy 2016-2017 - overview and results

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Mitrany's Mission

Mitrany is the Alumni Network for all graduates of the degree programme International Relations/International Organisation (IRIO) at the University of Groningen; formerly known as "Policy and governance of international organisations" and "International Organisation and International Relations." Mitrany was established in February 2013 by the department of IRIO and Study Association Clio.

Mitrany's mission is to facilitate a network that enables alumni to connect and interact with each other and with the Department of IRIO. In order to do so Mitrany organises regular (social) events in different cities which at the moment include Groningen, The Hague, and Brussels. Given the international nature of the degree programme and the geographic dispersion of alumni Mitrany hosts two digital platforms on Facebook and LinkedIn.

In the future, Mitrany seeks to expand its local circles to reach as many alumni as possible and to provide the alumni community with regular updates in a biannual newsletter.

Joining Mitrany will give Alumni access to a network of IRIO alumni from all around the world.

Overview of goals for 2016-2017

Given that Mitrany is a fairly new network, the board deems it necessary to set up structures that help to institutionalise the work of the board. This will help the overall setup of the network and will facilitate the hand over and transition period between the old and new board of each year. In order to set up the structure, the board will produce (i) a handbook on what Mitrany is and how it functions (for internal use only) and (ii) a clear list of goals that the board wants to achieve as well as a short-term and long-term strategy on how the board plans to achieve its goals.

Moreover, following the advise of the previous boards we decided to increase active participation in our network through offering bottom-up activities in order to establish and

grow the network before organizing events that require a larger audience. In order to do so the board has formulated three priorities for the period 2016-2017:

- I. Create local circles which organise regular drinks in Groningen, The Hague and in other local circles inside and outside the Netherlands such as e.g. in Brussels. In order to do so the board will set up the alumni ambassador function to run the local circles.
- II. Engage with new graduates at an early stage to inform them about Mitrany's activities. Mitrany will do so by continuing the organisation of graduation ceremonies for BA/MA graduates in cooperation with the department of IR and by cooperating closely with the Student Association Clio.
- III. Improve communication with alumni. In order to do so, Mitrany seeks to send out a biannual newsletter, update the website and improve Facebook and LinkedIn presence.

The subsequent parts will address in more detail, how the board seeks to achieve the aforementioned goals. Moreover each section will provide an overview of achievements, an evaluation (recommendations) and future plans.

I. Local circles and the Alumni Ambassador function

In order to increase participation and grow the base of active alumni the board decided to organise regular drinks with a non-formal character. Given the geographical dispersion of IRIO alumni in the Netherlands, Europe and the rest of the world the board decided to start these events in cities where a large number of alumni are present. After evaluating the situation it was decided that for the period 2016/2017, alumni drinks will take place in three cities – The Hague, Brussels, and Groningen (for a full overview of all events please see annex 1). After evaluation in the summer of 2017 will take place, the question of whether to add other circles may be discussed and a recommendation will be given to the next board. In order to be able to organise regular drinks in the aforementioned cities it was decided to set up the Alumni Ambassador function. The Alumni Ambassadors after receiving approval of the board will be appointed by and fall under the direct responsibility of the Commissioner External Relations & Events.

The Alumni Ambassador

The Mitrany Ambassador is responsible for organising drinks in the city where he/she lives. The profile of the ideal candidate is a social person who has already established his/her own network. Each city is planned to have two Alumni Ambassadors on the ground, however, at the moment this function is also fulfilled by two commissioners, one responsible for The Hague and one responsible for Brussels. In the near future, the board hopes to have two alumni ambassadors in place in each city to ensure the smooth organisation of the planned events. If the ambassador is, for whatever reason, unable to attend, the second ambassador can step in. The ambassador is asked to commit to the task for a minimum of six months, preferably one year but is encouraged to stay longer. After each event, the Mitrany Ambassador informs the External Relations and Events Commissioner of the Board about the number of participants, the amount of people he/she thinks will come back next time, and the overall atmosphere. Overall communication with the Alumni Ambassadors is handled by the External Relations and Events Commissioner as well as the Communication and PR Commissioner. With regard to the budgetary constraints and the financial situation of Mitrany it was decided that all events will

be organised on a zero-cost basis, which means that events can only take place in locations that do not charge a fee and drinks consumed by alumni cannot be covered by Mitrany¹. Should you be interested in becoming an Alumni Ambassador in your city please send us an email to mitrany@rug.nl using the subject line Alumni Ambassador.

The Hague – First Friday Five O’Clock (Mitrany Board member Wouter Kuin & Dyonne Niehof)

Drinks take place on the first Friday of each month, at five o’clock. The drinks in The Hague have shown to be the most successful. During the February edition, alumni who graduated roughly 15 years ago attended the drinks, together with alumni who graduated more recently. Even though the number of attendees varies between different events, the overall atmosphere is very good. Attendees express their enthusiasm for this kind of event.

Currently, the drinks are organised by two Mitrany board members. However, they are actively searching for other alumni willing to take over this responsibility. At the moment of writing, two persons have expressed interest.

#	Date	Attendees (ex. board members)
1	04/11/2016	24
2	02/12/2016	1
3	13/01/2017	10
4	04/02/2017	28
5	03/03/2017	8

Brussels (Alumni Ambassador Lisan van Assen & Meike Korff Mitrany Chairwoman)

Drinks take place every two months. Overall, the atmosphere was good and alumni expressed interest in this kind of event. However, the number of attendees highly differs between the three drinks that have been organised. The board and the Mitrany ambassadors in Brussels are devoted to keep building the network in Brussels. Particular attention will be given to targeted promotion.

#	Date	Attendees (ex. board members)
1	22/11/2016	11
2	24/01/2017	2
3	21/03/2017	10

Groningen (Alumni Ambassadors Iris van der Heijden & Dwayne van Haasen)

The first drinks in Groningen took place on March 3, 2017 and will be organised on a monthly basis.

¹ An exception to this policy was the first drinks organised in The Hague, where Mitrany covered a bill of 50 euros.

The drinks in Groningen will serve two purposes. Firstly, and most importantly, the Groningen alumni will have an opportunity to meet up. Secondly, the drinks will serve as a means through which the IRIO department can be actively involved in Mitrany. Hopefully, members of the department will become enthusiastic about this network and commit themselves.

<u>#</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Attendees (ex. board members)</u>
1	03/03/2016	12

Achievements

- The drinks have proven to be successful in The Hague, Groningen and Brussels. Mitrany members have expressed interest in this kind of low-key activities, where they can meet up with former fellow students or meet new alumni.
- Three Alumni Ambassadors were appointed in Brussels and Groningen, and the Alumni Ambassadors are frequently communicating with the Commissioner External Relations and Events.
- The drinks have attracted new members to Mitrany activities, and offered the opportunity to interact with alumni in a low-key and informal way.

Evaluation

- Given the different amount of Alumni living in The Hague, Brussels and Groningen, the board in cooperation with the Alumni Ambassadors decided to organise drinks according to a time scale that fits the local circle. This also explains why drinks will take place on a monthly basis in The Hague and Groningen and every two months in Brussels. This strategy has proven successful over the last four month. We advise to take this information into consideration, when starting new circles in other cities.
- Organising low-key, low-cost events based on a bottom-up approach have proven to be an effective way of organising regular events and to increase the number of active alumni while growing the network itself. Moreover, it is a good opportunity for the board to interact with alumni and to receive feedback. For example, some alumni expressed interest in having a platform they could use for posting (internship) vacancies.
- Since the success of a single event highly depends on the amount of promotion being made the board seeks to further improve communication and promotion around the events (for more information please see section III. Improve communication with alumni).
- Based on the database, the next Commissioner External Relations & Events could decide to establish circles and organise drinks in one or more additional cities. However, the success of the drinks in cities where board members are not represented heavily relies on the level of commitment of the Alumni Ambassadors. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that the Alumni Ambassadors are aware of their responsibilities and close contact must be maintained.

Future plans

- Two new Alumni Ambassadors must be found for The Hague, ideally before the installation of the new Board. So far, two people have expressed interest but all members are hereby invited to contact the board for more information on this position.
- As previously mentioned, some members have expressed interest in a Mitrany platform where they can post (internship) vacancies. The new Commissioner External Relations and Events is advised to look into this.
- In the future, possibilities for organising larger events such as symposia or lectures might present itself. However, the network must be properly established before any such activities can be organised. Currently, there is not enough demand of active alumni for such events.

II. Engage with new graduates at an early stage and cooperation with Clio

The goal of the Clio representative in the board is to ensure a successful cooperation between Study Association Clio (Clio) and the IRIO Alumni Association Mitrany (Mitrany), in order to bring IRIO alumni and current students together and provide the latter with future career perspectives. The Clio representative aims to support close cooperation in the organisation of events that are interesting for both parties.

Achievements

- By the beginning of February 2017, several Clio events have been organised in cooperation with Mitrany. Different Clio committees made use of the Mitrany alumni database. Two alumni agreed to attend the Career Evening on the 20th of December 2016, organised by the Clio Career Committee. Alumni also attended the Alumni drinks during the Clio Excursion to Brussels, and one Alumni had agreed to give a lecture during the Night of IR but unfortunately had to cancel last minute due to illness.
- Additionally, the Clio board and the Mitrany board cooperated in the organisation of the alumni-mentor programme, which allows students to contact alumni with career related questions. Mitrany provided for two alumni that supported the alumni-mentor programme.
- Besides, the Clio representative also promoted the First Friday Five o'clock drinks amongst the Clio members, both via word to mouth advertisement and via the Clio Facebook page.

Evaluation

- First of all, the Clio representative advises his/her successor to start documenting the alumni that are contacted by the different Clio committees. This is important to gain oversight on the success rate of the invitations sent to alumni and to prevent an overload of invitations to certain alumni.
- Secondly, the Clio representative advises the future Alumni Ambassadors of the First Friday Five o'clock drinks in Groningen, to provide the Clio representative with the necessary information in order to promote the event amongst the master students.

- Thirdly, Clio seeks to establish its own database of active Clio members. The representative advises to allow both parties, i.e. Clio and Mitrany access to this database.

Future plans

- The Clio representative would advise to continue the intensity of the cooperation between Clio and Mitrany given that it constitutes a win-win situation for both.
- Additionally, cooperation can be expanded in certain areas including the exchange of data from the databases and future master events organised by the Clio board. However, the Clio board needs to improve the documentation of the Alumni contacted by the different committees in order to ensure that the database is in a responsible manner.

III. Improve communication with alumni

In order to improve communication between Mitrany and Alumni the board formulated the following priorities for 2016/2017:

1. Create publicity, 'make Mitrany known', provide general information about Mitrany
2. Increase the number of members
3. Inform members about events
4. Facilitate engagement amongst alumni
5. Consolidate our organisation basis

These goals are achieved through the following communication channels:

<u>Channel</u>	<u>Used for</u>	<u>Corresponds to goal no:</u>
Website*	Used for general information available, maintain the membership database, provide more detailed information about events.	1, 2, 3
Facebook page*	Used to inform members of events, to make announcements and to share stories from our newsletter. In general, two posts per event are published. One two weeks before the event and one at the beginning of the week in which the event is to take place.	3, 5(, 1, 2)
Emails*	Used for invitations.	3
Flyers	Are in the diploma map of people who graduate.	1, 2
Facebook group	A forum for contact amongst alumni.	4
LinkedIn group	Used to inform members of events, done by Alumni Ambassadors	1, 3, 4
Newsletter**	Will be sent to members via email twice a year	5
Piece in Clio newsletter	Used twice a year when the semester ends, to inform recent graduates of Mitrany	1, 2
Piece in Broerstraat 5	Can be employed if deemed useful	1
Twitter	Used of this method is decreasing, posts from Facebook are automatically put on Twitter.	3

* The starred channels are prioritised channels of information sending by Mitrany, because the board deems them most suitable to achieve our communication goals. Goal 4 is primarily achieved through organised drinks, not via communication policy.

** The content of the newsletter was written by different authors and collected by the secretary. The layout was done jointly by the Secretary and Commissioner PR. Mailchimp was chosen as a platform to send out the newsletter from. For more information on the newsletter please see annex 2.

Achievements

- The website of Mitrany has been redesigned to make it more aesthetically attractive, to make it more accessible, to increase the amount of information and to make it fit the type of bottom-up organisation that Mitrany aspires and attempts to be, consisting of local circles. Each local circle has its own space on the website under the header 'Local';
- The design of invitation-emails was updated to match the website;
- Every drink Mitrany organised was promoted via our Facebook page by 1) creating an event and; 2) sharing this event with an text on the Facebook page two weeks before it took place; 3) reminding people of the event by sharing it again with a quick note in the week the event was to take place. Posts have automatically been posted to Twitter as well;
- Almost every drink Mitrany organised was promoted via email through an invitation. The policy has been adapted during the year: read the evaluation for more information;
- Drinks have not been consistently promoted through LinkedIn, because problems were encountered. Read the evaluation for more.
- Every drink Mitrany organised was promoted via a news-item, an agenda-item and an update on the respective webpage of the local circle on the website of Mitrany;
- Flyers have been placed in the diploma map of the BA graduation session of 3 November 2016;
- A Newsletter was sent to all members on 12 January 2017;
- Three Newsletter pieces were promoted via Facebook in February, with a link to a web page on our website to the full articles;
- A piece was put in the Clio Newsletter of the first week of February, bringing Mitrany to the attention of the recent graduates;
- Several members have used the Mitrany Facebook group as a forum.

Evaluation

- In the beginning of the academic year, the board has decided to send **only one** email to alumni living close to a local circle just before this circle would hold its **first** drinks. This policy has been employed until December 2016, when the board has decided that it is better to send an email to people in a local circle before **every** event.
- The board has attempted to create a LinkedIn page next to a LinkedIn group in order to use it in the same manner as the Facebook page. However, due to LinkedIn policy requiring every organisation to have a unique email extension, Mitrany could not open a LinkedIn page. Our extension is @rug.nl, which is already in use by the RUG. Hence,

in December 2016, the board decided that the LinkedIn group will be used for the promotion of events. Given, that Mitrany does not have its own profile, the Alumni Ambassadors will fulfil this task on behalf of Mitrany.

- Concerning the success of the newsletter, the Secretary was very pleased with the content of the newsletter and its outreach. Out of 950 members, the newsletter was successfully delivered to 656 people with an opening rate of 51.7%. Since, the industry average is 14.6%, the board advises to continue using the newsletter as an effective communication tool.
- Only three people unsubscribed from the newsletter.
- The approximately 300 delivery failures can be explained by outdated email addresses or spelling mistakes. The board will address these issues to ensure better communication with alumni in the future.

Future plans

- The board will research the option to spend €150.00 on promotion via Facebook. Mitrany will promote the drinks which are organised in its Local circles;
- Drinks will continue to be promoted via our aforementioned media;
- Another Newsletter will be published this academic year and its content will be promoted via Facebook.

Overview Financial Affairs

Last year, the IRIO department decided to cut back funding for Mitrany. This resulted in the following contributions for the year 2016-2017 and for the future:

2016 - 2017:	1350 euro
2017 - 2018:	900 euro
2018 - 2019:	405 euro
2019 onwards:	0 euro

The Board strongly believed that this decision greatly endangered the financial sustainability of the Mitrany Alumni Network in the long-term. In order to address this issue, the Treasurer and the IRIO Staff Representative have been in contact with the IRIO department and have advocated a reconsideration of this decision. A letter was sent to the department and the issue was addressed during the IRIO Department meeting in February. As a result of this lobby, the IRIO Department has acknowledged the financial difficulties that Mitrany will face should contribution and has indicated to revise its policy. However, the IRIO Department has not yet determined the exact amount yet that Mitrany is going to receive in future years. This situation will be closely observed in the upcoming weeks.

Regarding the overall financial situation of 2016-2017 it must be stressed that the board faced severe liquidity problems at the beginning of the year as the IRIO department transferred its contribution 3 months later than promised. Consequently, the decision was made to reserve 850 euros from this years budget for next year to ensure that the next board will be operational from the start and to ensure the sustainable existence of Mitrany in the long-term, which was unclear because of the IRIO Department's decision. In order to save this amount, the Board decided to organise events at zero-costs this year. For an overview of the Mitrany's Financial Statement Form and please see annex 3.

Achievements

- In the previous years, the IRIO department reimbursed the Mitrany board after payments were made. This meant that board members had to advance payments themselves. Since, all board members are young professionals or students the board decided that his system of payment will not work for Mitrany. One major achievement this year was that the Treasurer managed to get all fund on Mitrany's bank account. This advances the speed of reimbursements and improves the transparency of Mitrany's financial administration.
- Additionally, the board managed to organise a number of events on a zero-cost basis which results in a substantial reservation for next year.

Evaluation

- So far, the zero-cost policy for organised events seems to be successful.

- The Board advises to continue with this strategy as long as the financial situation continues to be unstable. However, should the IRIO Department's contribution change we advise the next board to reassess the financial strategy.
- Due to time constraints and past experiences, fundraising through acquisition is regarded as unfeasible. Moreover, the Board feels that a membership fee is not feasible for an association like Mitrany.

Future plans

- The Board is considering requesting members for a donation at the end of the Board year.
- Since Mitrany is also of great benefit to the IRIO department, the Board seeks to enhance mutually beneficial relations with the IRIO department in the future to ensure that financial support can be guaranteed.

Annex 1: Overview of Events

Date	Event	Location
November		
3.11.2016	BA Graduation Ceremony	Van Swinderenhuis from 18-22 PM
4.11.2016	Informal Drinks #1	The Hague
22.11.2016	Informal Drinks #1	Brussels
December		
2.12.2016	Informal Drinks #2	The Hague
January		
13.01.2017	Informal Drinks #3	The Hague
24.01.2017	Informal Drinks #2	Brussels
February		
03.02.2017	Informal Drinks #4	The Hague
March		
03.03.2017	Informal Drinks #5	The Hague
03.03.2017	Informal Drinks #1	Groningen
21.03.2017	Informal Drinks #3	Brussels

Annex 2: Newsletter

On 22 February, Mitrany sent out its first Newsletter to all members. You can read the Newsletter via this link: <http://eepurl.com/cyqJZ9>. The individual stories in this Newsletter are also featured on our website. You can read them via this link: <http://www.mitrany.eu/newsletter20171.html>.

Annex 3: Financial Statement Form

The Hague, 04.04.2017

Dear member,

Hereby, you are presented the Balance Sheet and Surplus & Deficit Statement of IRIO Alumni Association Mitrany, belonging to the period 01-04-2016 until 31-03-2017.

As the future funding of the IRIO department was unclear for a large part of the financial year, the Board decided to create a reservation to ensure Mitrany's future existence. A statement of the Audit Committee on the truthfulness and originality of these documents is provided at the end of this report.

On behalf of the Mitrany Board,

Wouter Sebastiaan Kuin

Treasurer

Mitrany Surplus and Deficit Account

Mitrany Balance		Date: 31.3.2017
Item	Debit	Credit
SNS bank account	1.077,50	
Reservation Mitrany		850,00
Surplus/Deficit		227,50
Total Balance	1.077,50	1.077,50
Surplus and Deficit Account		
Item	Debit	Credit
Reservation previous financial year	2,47	
Website Costs	10,95	
Travel Costs	102,90	
Travel Costs	50,00	
Bank Fees	71,68	
Consumptions	84,50	
Promotion Costs	150,00	
Reservation Mitrany	850,00	
Contribution IRIO Department		1.350,00
Surplus/Deficit	32,44	
Total Surplus & Deficit	1.354,94	1.350,00
Textual Notice		
<p>The amounts in Italic are costs falling under the current budget but will be paid in the next financial year. Promotion costs entail Facebook advertisement. Reservation Mitrany entails savings necessary to ensure Mitrany's future existence. As the Chair lives in Brussels, 50% of her travel costs are covered by Mitrany. Reservation previous financial year covers the deficit that the board faced at the start of the year. Consumptions entail the free first drink that was offered on Mitrany's first activity this year, as well as a free drink during a dinner with Board members at the end of the year.</p>		

Groningen, 04.04.2017

To the General Members Meeting of Mitrany,

We, the Audit Committee, examined the financial report and related responsibilities of the Treasurer over the year 2016-2017.

We are of the opinion that this report offers sufficient insight into the accomplishments of the Board and the financial state of the association.

The Audit Committee approves the Balance and Surplus and Deficit Statement belonging to the financial year 2016-2017.

Hester van Kammen and Emi Visser
Audit Committee 2016-2017

Appendix 4: Change Audit Committee

Dear members,

The Mitrany Board proposes to discharge the following members from the Audit Committee:

- Hester van Kammen
- Emi Visser

The Mitrany Board proposes to install the following nominated members in the Audit Committee:

- Floran van Amelsfort
- Thom van Amersfoort

Should any objections exist to this change in position, please contact the Board before 21 April 2017.