

# Irvan Sutiono

GRADUATED  
IN 2017

Jakarta  
Indonesia

HEAD OF INNOVATION  
AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

ANANTAGRAHA



## Irvan's journey from hospitality to social impact

Since young, Irvan Sutiono has always been drawn to the idea of fostering human progress through technology: initially through bioengineering, before pivoting to hospitality management at EHL Hospitality Business School after an enlightening encounter with a hospitality professional. He was drawn by the allure of exploring the world through work, the industry's distinctive "human touch", and the professional and personal opportunities available in Asia.

This quest for knowledge has brought Irvan Sutiono on a fascinating journey that started from his hometown in Jakarta, across continents to Switzerland, France, the UK and back to Asia in Thailand, before returning to Jakarta where he now serves as Head of Innovation and Asset Management at his family business. He is currently working on prototyping affordable, sustainable housing to enhance the well-being of his fellow Indonesians through his family business, Anantagraha.



**“EHL’s alumni community is full of people with passion – who are driven by grit, who enjoy life, and who aspire to innovate.”**

## Stepping into a world of opportunity

Irvan initially knew little about the hospitality industry, but his perspective changed rapidly. After accompanying a family member on site visits to various luxury hotels in Shanghai, he was captivated by the industry’s mobility and rapid growth.

“It was then that I decided to apply to the first and best hospitality school in the world, EHL,” recalls Irvan, who thrived in the campus’ international environment. Academically, his analytical mind was drawn to finance-related courses such as Financial Analysis, Managerial Accounting, Real Estate Finance, and Portfolio Management. These deeply interested him because he could “explore different ways to arrive at a precise answer.”

Aside from his professional pursuit of a career in hotel real estate with the hotel brokerage team at CBRE Hotels in London after graduation, Irvan was also actively managing his entrepreneur pursuits. His social enterprise, Isara, a Deaf community-centred platform, blossomed during his EHL days into a community platform for individuals with hearing loss.

Offering full suite services that include a sign language learning application and online interpreter services, the Paris-based project was later handpicked by the French Government to be part of 70 global startups in the French Tech Ticket program.

## Southeast Asia calling

While Irvan was working in Europe, Southeast Asia was experiencing a surge in tourism, with ASEAN’s regional economies growing significantly faster than the global average. Recognizing the opportunity, Irvan recounts his decision to work with Bangkok-based hotel owner-operator Compass in 2018: “I decided to exit Isara, and made a shift to the buy-side in hotel investments, and relocated to Thailand.”

Within just a year there, he rose to the role of manager in investments and compliance. And yet, it wasn’t long before he felt something was missing. “Isara had ignited a passion in me,” he said. “I missed the social impact aspect of what I do.”

This realisation led him to join the Global Shapers Community (GSC) in Bangkok, working on numerous projects such as career consulting, gamifying financial literacy for Thai university students, rolling out global humanitarian aid, as well as organising local blood donations, to name a few. Affiliated with the World Economic Forum, GSC is a network of young individuals working together to address challenges across the globe.

One of Irvan's favourite sayings:  
 “We learn who we are in practice, not in theory.”

## Writing the next chapter of the family business

After 13 years of living and working abroad, Irvan has since returned home to Indonesia to apply his global expertise to his family business, Anantagraha, which specialises in bespoke design and build services for high-end residential and industrial projects.

“Growing up in a family of architects, I’ve seen how a few simple sketches can turn into solid structures that provide shelter, create a sense of community, and bring business,” said Irvan. However, he also acknowledges that the construction industry is “notoriously bad for the environment, and painfully slow to embrace new technologies.”

Acknowledging the contradictory realities, Irvan made the bold decision to incorporate sustainability into the company’s business ventures and position it as a catalyst for Indonesia’s smart city initiatives.

“I’m currently working on a prototype for a smart and green townhouse that balances quality, affordability, and

sustainability,” says Irvan. The idea is ambitious, but if financially viable, he wants to expand it to Indonesia’s new “capital of the future”: Nusantara.

A leader by example, Irvan also continues to champion sustainability in Jakarta’s hospitality and tourism industry, offering pro-bono consulting for small medium enterprises (SMEs) and has plans to gamify ideals of UN Sustainable Development Goals through a board game so that they are more interactive and relatable for school children.

He also continues to be inspired by the EHL alumni network and its community of individuals who are driven by passion, courage and always thinking ahead of the curve. Ever optimistic, Irvan believes that anyone who has the desire to, can make a positive difference in the world. “Start small. Explore what areas you are passionate about and gradually see how to create an impact”.

