

## IN THE SPIRIT OF TOGETHERNESS

**The founder of IKEA, Ingvar Kamprad, passed away at his home in on Sweden on January 27. He died peacefully, surrounded by his closest family.**

**Ingvar is known as one of the world's greatest entrepreneurs. He was a driven and hardworking man but has now come to his final rest.**

Born in 1926, Ingvar Kamprad started his career already as a five-year-old, when he went from neighbour to neighbour in Älmhult, Sweden, selling matches, seeds and Christmas cards.

Ingvar Kamprad founded the company IKEA in 1943, at an age of 17, and it went on to grow during his lifetime. It was restructured into three independent company groups in the eighties and has over the years given employment to hundreds of thousands of people in some 60 countries. The name IKEA was formed from his initials and the first letters of Elmtaryd and Agunnaryd, the farm and parish where he grew up and from where he initially ran the business. IKEA originally sold pens, wallets, table runners, watches and nylon stockings before moving in to home furnishing in the late 40s. In 1958, the first IKEA store opened in Älmhult, Sweden. At that time, it was the largest furniture display in Scandinavia.

Ingvar married his first wife Kerstin Wadling in 1950 and eight years later they adopted their daughter Annika. Ingvar focused a tremendous amount of time on building the business during those years and spent large parts of the year travelling, which was probably one of the reasons their marriage ended already in 1960.

But in 1963, Ingvar Kamprad married Margareta Stennert who were to become his beloved lifetime partner. Together they had three sons, Peter, Jonas and Mathias, and the couple were each other's support and joy until Margareta Kamprad passed away in 2011.

Already in the late 70s, Ingvar Kamprad started to "plan for his own death" as he liked to describe it, and decided to donate the IKEA furniture operations, the INGKA Group, to a Dutch charitable foundation (Stichting Ingka Foundation). This was his way of creating an ownership structure that would secure independence and a long-term perspective on the further development of the business.

As IKEA expanded into new markets, Ingvar concluded that a franchise system would offer the best strategy for growing the business. It would keep a robust grip on the IKEA concept and at the same time allow the encouragement of a strong entrepreneurial spirit in the businesses. He subsequently established Inter IKEA Systems B.V. as the franchisor, holding the rights and responsibilities to control, safeguard and develop the IKEA Concept. Inter IKEA Systems B.V. is owned by the Liechtenstein-based Interogo Foundation which also has a charitable purpose.

In 1988, Ikafo, once founded by Ingvar Kamprad, became an independent group of companies. Ikafo develops and manages companies within financial services, insurance, real estate and retail, and is owned by Ingvar Kamprad's three sons.

During the same year he decided to step down as the CEO and became a senior advisor to the supervisory board of INGKA Holding B.V. (The IKEA Group) - where he until the very end continued to contribute to the business, especially in the area of product range development as well as sharing his vast knowledge with co-workers around the world.

During the later years he actively engaged in transitioning the family engagement in the three Kamprad-founded company groups to the next generation, which will ensure that the companies continue in the same spirit with which they were founded by the father.

Ingvar's strong interest in people's living conditions was formed during the 20th century's Sweden. He cared deeply for the many people; for co-workers and customers as well as the co-workers of our suppliers and their families. He was greatly committed to young entrepreneurship and to the development of his co-workers.

Following the same spirit, he established the foundation *Fru Berta Kamprad* in loving memory of his mother. He thereby formalized the fundraising for cancer research that he had started already in the 60s. The Berta Kamprad foundation provides funds for cancer research at Lund University Hospital in Sweden.

Ingvar Kamprad was also a driving force in expanding the philanthropic work through Stichting IKEA Foundation which focuses on helping children and youth in the poorest communities in the world to create a better life for themselves and their families. The foundation currently donates €160 mill. for this cause annually.

He further went on to establish the Kamprad Family Foundation in 2011 with a purpose to support, stimulate and reward education and scientific research to promote entrepreneurship, the environment, competence, health and social progress. The Kamprad Family Foundation has a SEK 3.5 billion endowment.

As Ingvar Kamprad's memory is honored by all the people working within the three Kamprad-founded company groups today, it is in the strong spirit of "togetherness" that he created.

Ingvar Kamprad was a great inspiration to everyone he touched in his life and a fantastic entrepreneur of the typical Småland'ish kind – stubborn, hardworking and always with a twinkle in the eye. He worked until the very end of his life, staying true to his own motto that most things still remain to be done. The companies founded by Ingvar Kamprad will continue to grow in his spirit and with the same vision; to contribute to a better everyday life for the many people.