

Student Impact Organisation

The perspective of the next generation

The ambition

The complexity of the global challenges requires insights from different perspectives. Today, there is a lack of exchange of knowledge between students and policymakers. The generation that will experience the result of the decisions are not involved enough in the policymaking process, this disconnection is also acknowledged by the UN. This problem extends to Sweden, where governmental organizations and committees often have a mismatch between the age of employees and the population as a whole. New policies and regulations that will affect people for years lack input from those who will be affected the most. Our purpose is to help bridge this divide by focusing on putting forward the opinions of university students from different academic disciplines to decision-makers of society in the pursuit of dealing with the SDGs. Our ambition is to take a first step in making cross-academic and cross-sectorial cooperation a natural part of how we deal with societal issues. We want to encourage an interdisciplinary exchange of knowledge among students and policymakers.

The Purpose

What is SIO?

In order to achieve our ambition we created the Student Impact Organisation (SIO). SIO aims to minimize the gap and enhance collaboration between students from different academic backgrounds and policymakers. Through SIO we host various seminars to gather the participating students' perspectives. Each seminar focuses on a specific topic within one of the global SDGs and students are invited to present their perspectives via discussions and presentations. In each seminar we invite one or several partners (policymakers) that works with the subject of discussion. Our ambition is to collaborate with policymakers that shape the society of the future. These policymakers should ideally work to achieve other SDGs in their respective sector. In conclusion, SIO is a platform where the policymakers of tomorrow can meet the policymakers of today and together shape the society of the future.



The platform

We have created a platform that enables continuous expansion and further life of the project, after the course is finished. Our intention with the platform is to create a well-known concept that will create interest among Swedish students and thereby grow. An essential part of the platform is our website that holds several key functions. Some components are general description of the project, information on our seminars and the possibility as a student to register for seminars.

For more information, visit our website on <https://www.studentimpactorg.com>

” Youth participation leads to better decisions and outcomes - UN report



The SDG

Collaboration and partnerships is a key to support the achievement of the global SDGs. It is so important that it has received its own goal, number 17. This goal is important throughout all other goals and is there to help achieve them. As such cooperation is key to achieve any progress towards the other goals and is why we chose to focus on it. By enhancing cross-academic and cross-sectorial collaboration between students and policy-makers, SIO hopes to play an important role in bringing different perspectives together to shape the framework of a sustainable future.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Why are students a key group?

Today's students will to a high degree be the creators of the policies, the technology and the business models of tomorrow. Students have highly developed critical thinking skills and will therefore be able to analyze more complex situations and give valuable insight to those we collaborate with. Students also have several different perspectives from their respective field of study that might be of value for policymakers. They are also more accessible.

The Pilot Project

The Partnership

In order to test the concept we partnered up with KOMET to initiate a pilot project.

Komet was very interested in the concept of bringing people from different sectors and different educational backgrounds together to discuss important issues. This, they believed, is valuable both in their work but also in a more general perspective and for society as a whole; "The fast technological development requires knowledge with a cross-sectorial perspective. Since today's students are tomorrow's co-workers, student's ability to transfer such knowledge to the business-community and society in general plays an important role." - xx, Komet

Together, we decided on a topic we chose to call "Surveillance & Integrity in Times of Crisis."

Kommittén för teknologisk innovation & etik

The Committee for Technological Innovation and Ethics (Komet) was established by the Swedish Government in 2018. Its mission is to help the Government to identify policy challenges, contribute to reducing uncertainty surrounding existing regulations, and accelerate policy development linked to fourth industrial revolution technologies.

The Seminar



• **Topic of discussion:** *Surveillance & Integrity in times of crisis (a part of goal 9)*. This is a topic that Komet works with on a daily basis and we decided the topic together with them. Komet believed it would be valuable in their work to get students' opinions on this matter to highlight different perspectives.

• **16 students from 7 different universities** participated. They registered via our website and before the seminar we sent out articles to read as a preparation. The seminar was held on Zoom and we mixed whole-class discussions with discussions in smaller break-out rooms.

”This project is very interesting for us, not only in regards to this specific question, but also in a more general setting. Enhancing interdisciplinary exchange of knowledge is something we have promoted for a long time.” - Anna Fridén, Principal Secretary of KOMET

The Journey

1. Brainstorming

We decided to target goal 17 and that we wanted to enhance cross-academic and cross-sectorial collaboration in order to bring solutions to the global SDGs.

2. External contact

We established contact with KOMET to see if they were interested in collaborating through this project. They stated that collaboration with students would be valuable in their work.

3. Creating a concept

We decided to narrow our focus to cross-academic collaboration between students and public policy-makers. We created a concept around the idea and designed a pilot project in order to test it. We also created a website.

4. Dealing with a crisis

Due to the coronacrisis we had to restructure our initial plan of how the pilot project was going to be carried out. We had to move it online and we changed the topic.

5. Pilot project

We approached people at different universities across Sweden to recruit participants. We conducted the pilot project via Zoom on April 20th.

6. Evaluation

We collected feedback from the participants and compiled a summary report to KOMET. We evaluated the pilot project and identified improvements to be made going forward.



Screenshot from the seminar

Impact

KOMET highly appreciated our project and have decided to conduct an interview with us and publish an article on their website about our project, with the hopes of other policy-makers also approaching us.

New perspective and important contribution to a real issue dealt with by a committee established by the Swedish government

The Challenges

- **Attracting students** - Encouraging students to participate in an unfamiliar project proved to be a challenge. However, the agility and adaptability of the seminar topic allowed us to switch to a highly relevant topic and attract enough students. We also leveraged our contact network within different Universities across Sweden.
- **Reliant on Komet** - Our pilot-project was reliant on the support from Komet; they were our way of reaching policy-makers. Even though they were busy dealing with the issues of Covid-19, they still believed in our project enough to carry through with the project.
- **Covid-19** - The Covid-19 pandemic forced us to rethink our original idea of hosting the seminar at SSE. This however turned out to become one of our greatest strengths rather than a weakness. Moving to online seminars increased the scalability of our concept significantly. Online tools such as Zoom is becoming far more used by students and policymakers alike, enabling us to reach students outside the Stockholm region. We therefore see online seminars as a long-term solution.

The Future

More seminars will be hosted. Next up is seminars about **Mental Health on May 28th** and **Online Teaching on June 17th**. These will be held online but when circumstances allow we will also try physical seminars.

We have received positive feedback from Karol Vieker at SSE for a potential future partnership. We are also in contact with student associations at various universities to scale up the project, spread the word about SIO, and create partnerships for better solutions for the future.

Gaining traction among students, we can become the first option for policy-makers looking for new perspectives. Moving ahead, we see great opportunities for governments and municipalities not only in Sweden but also abroad to make use of our concept.

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