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Boosting the inclusive valorisation of new research-based ideas at Uppsala University Innovation

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| Vision and Aims | <p>As a publicly funded institution in Sweden, Uppsala University (UU) is obligated to proactively incorporate equal opportunity considerations into all facets of its operations. Furthermore, it is paramount for the university's innovation office (UU Innovation) to promote solutions that meet the needs of society as a whole. To ensure this, it is important to encourage students and researchers of all ages and genders from diverse scientific disciplines to identify as innovators and actively contribute to future solutions. We have translated these efforts into a three-year strategy with an associated activity plan. The strategy is deeply committed to promoting equal opportunities. Its vision is to ensure that UU Innovation provides accessible and relevant support for early-stage innovation development for every researcher at Uppsala University.</p> <p>The specific aims of the effort are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to increase the total number of new research-based ideas for valorisation per year by 50%. • to ensure that the main contacts for those ideas are distributed within the 40/60 range for gender representation. |
| Target Audience | <p>Uppsala University researchers and students.</p> |
| Key Features | <p>Some key components and guiding principles have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work has been characterised by continuous development. New concepts have been pilot-tested, iterated, and evaluated against metrics to see if the activity had the intended effect. • The approach must become an integral part of the innovation office's core processes because it represents a fundamental shift in our work methods and behaviors. It cannot be executed as a short-term project with a limited project team. • We have avoided activities aimed solely at women. Two exceptions have been made on March 8, 2021 and 2022 when women's conditions in academia and the need for norm-critical innovation were highlighted in seminar format. <p>The activities carried out can be grouped into the following main categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder insight: 1:1 interviews with researchers who have not yet used our support with the aim of understanding what issues they are grappling with, how they view innovation and valorisation issues, and what kind of support they would benefit from. • Awareness raising: activities to reach out with information about what support the unit provides and for whom. Examples include mailings, open webinars, uniform presentations with a unified |

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| | <p>communication message, and communication around existing innovation projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowering the threshold for a first contact: finding ways to encourage more researchers to take the first step towards idea development, showing that innovation is for everyone and that new ideas emerge in all fields of science. Here we have introduced open coaching, where we have explained the possibility of early contact with an advisor for those who are curious but may not yet have a specific idea. An online self-assessment test helps researchers quickly identify innovative ideas they generate in their research. • Communication: a well-thought-out communication message that reinforces the idea that innovation is for everyone through a wide range of examples - both of innovators and innovations. • Internal training: knowledge-enhancing courses and seminars for employees in equal opportunities work, gender equality, norm criticism, and norm-critical innovation. Sharing experiences with sister organisations involved in similar initiatives. • Continuous data monitoring: data for the innovation office's KPIs are continuously evaluated with regard to gender distribution. |
| Achievements & Learnings | Over two and a half years, UU Innovation has increased the annual intake of new research-based ideas by 25%. Moreover, the representation of women as primary contacts for these ideas has risen from under 25% to over 40%. While our active efforts have successfully expanded idea inflow, it's crucial to recognise that sustaining this progress demands ongoing commitment. Without continued efforts to stimulate a well-distributed idea inflow, we risk reverting to previous levels |
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| Launch Date [& Duration] | 2021-01-01 – 2023-12-31 |
| Partners/Sponsors | n/a |
| Further Information | https://www.uuinnovation.uu.se/about/ |
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