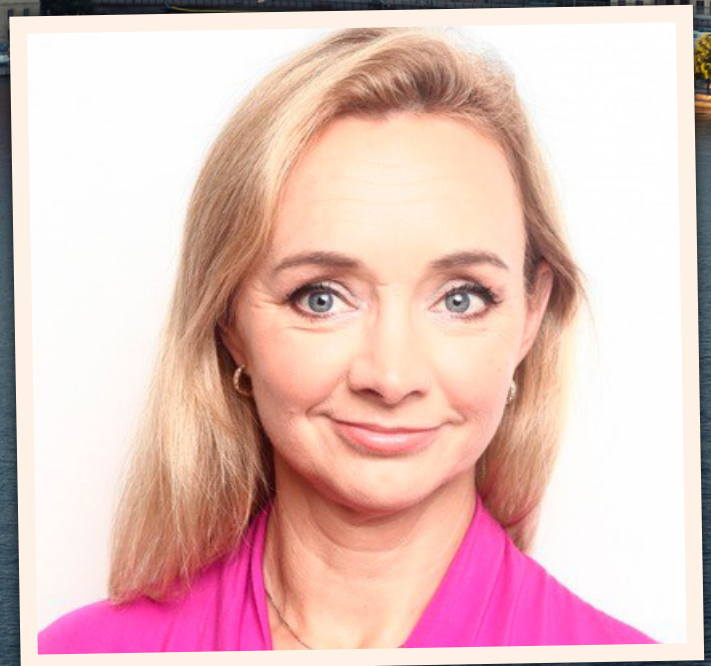
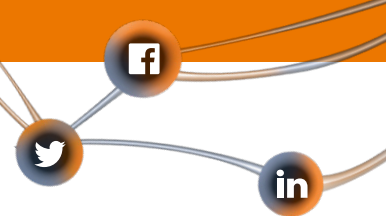


RESEARCH!SWEDEN COLLABORATES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Research!Sweden was created in 2010 and is a politically independent, non-profit foundation. Our vision is that medical research and companies will develop in or move to Sweden and that medical advances will benefit the population as fast as possible.



Anna Nilsson Vindefjärd MBA PHD



Research!Sweden's mission is to inform and raise awareness about the importance of medical research for health and prosperity. We do this by providing key decision makers with facts and policy advice, and by creating a constructive climate for discussing change. In 2014 we created the member-organization "Agenda for health and prosperity" where 34 organizations join forces to collaborate under the leadership of Research!Sweden.

The members are evenly balanced between academia, healthcare, business and patient-organisations. We work with a systems approach and a long-term view to improve the environment for medical research, business and healthcare.

A STRATEGY FOR SWEDISH LIFE SCIENCE

Our first project was to lay a foundation for a strategy for life science in Sweden. Getting all the different actors around the table, sharing the analyses that Research!Sweden had prepared as background material and agreeing on what needed to be prioritised at a national level was an exhausting, but necessary and very rewarding experience.

Several meetings and months later we had agreed on four goals and 14 prioritised policy-proposals. Our report included a thorough analyses as well as action-plans for each proposal.

We presented the report to the three ministers of research, industry and health who all attended a conference we arranged at the Karolinska Institutet in early 2015. At that time the Government had recently appointed a life science-coordinator who also was there to receive our report.

That was the start of a constructive collaboration and the coordinator later stated in a film that he made great use of our input, as he could move faster on the basis of our proposals which had already been agreed upon by such a broad representation of the life science-actors in Sweden.

CONTINUING TO ADAPT

Since then, we've continued to work in a highly structured way with workshops in areas that the members decide on in yearly strategy-meetings. Research!Sweden develops the results from workshops into reports and also transfers the knowledge through conferences and political meetings.

That way we really make a difference in keeping policy-makers alert to the advances in science and the impacts these advances have on the development in life science and health care. Adding to that are the policy-proposals we develop for Sweden to keep a competitive edge in this field, with the end goal of increased health and prosperity. This year the focus has been on the issues of health threats, such as the present pandemic.

The pandemic that started in 2020 has shown that our society is very vulnerable to unforeseen outbreaks of new diseases. Healthcare and medical research and development are at the forefront of managing and combating a pandemic. Great efforts have been made, but it has also become clear that there are parts of the system that are not adapted to today's global health challenges.

The broad composition of the "Agenda for Health and Prosperity" means that we can provide a picture of how the pandemic has affected medical research and development in healthcare, academia and companies from a variety of perspectives. It gives us a unique opportunity to jointly identify what strengths and weaknesses Sweden has when it comes to conducting and benefiting from medical research and development during a crisis.

We have created an overall picture of lessons that we presented in a new report in April 2021. Based on the analysis, we have developed proposals for measures that need to be implemented to strengthen Sweden's crisis preparedness by taking greater advantage of medical research and development in the event of future health threats.

Our top 10 policy advice for greater benefit from research and development for future health threats are gathered into four areas:

- A resilient research environment is required to cope with future unknown crises
- Sharing of health and care data must work in both crisis and normal situations
- Research competence in healthcare must be secured in the face of future health threats
- There must be an infrastructure that allows clinical studies to be performed even in a health crisis situation

The four areas are of course wide at first glance, but our ten proposals are specific and by including action plans we hope that we will be more resilient when the next health crises comes along.

When we engage politicians on the subject, we begin by thinking about which areas we all have an interest in developing next, and so our collaboration and work for a stronger life science in Sweden continues.

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