



ABOUT VA 2016



Vetenskap & Allmänhet



WHAT IS VA?

VA (Public & Science) is a non-profit Swedish organisation whose purpose is to promote openness and dialogue between researchers and society. We, together with many others, are convinced that dialogue is a cornerstone of our democratic society and vital for ensuring that research leads to solutions to the challenges facing society.

We carry out studies and surveys, organise meetings and activities, and develop and test new formats for dialogue. In addition, we collect and disseminate knowledge and experience, gained by ourselves and others, about public engagement and communication between researchers and the public.

The organisation is financed through membership fees, project grants and funding from the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research.

VA'S MAIN AIMS

1. **Increase collaboration between researchers and society.**
2. **Develop knowledge and dialogue about:**
 - a. Public perceptions of research and research priorities
 - b. Prerequisites for research, methods and results
 - c. Methods for science communication.
3. **Be a leading knowledge hub** for public engagement and science communication.
4. **Strengthen all aspects of researchers' engagement with society**, democratic, cultural, as well as educational, and other socially beneficial aspects.

“ *There is a strong commitment among the public, and that commitment can strengthen research. We should take every opportunity to involve the public in research.*

Helene Hellmark Knutsson, Minister for Higher Education and Research at VA Day 2015.



VA (Public & Science) was founded in 2002 and its members consist of some 80 organisations, such as authorities, universities, businesses, adult education associations and research

funding bodies. In addition, it has a number of individual members. For more information about membership of VA and an up-to-date list of its members see www.v-a.se/membership



EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS

'Meet the media' seminars for researchers

VA, together with the four Swedish research councils and certain universities, organises media seminars for researchers to inspire them to participate in public debate. The seminars provide an introduction to the news media and how journalists work. The aim is to give researchers a better insight into the expectations of the media industry and make it easier for them to engage with journalists as well as with their university communication departments.

RRI Tools

Responsible Research and Innovation, RRI, is about conducting research and innovation in a responsible manner, in dialogue with all stakeholders. VA is in charge of the Swedish part of the EU project RRI Tools, which involves 30 countries and aims to develop tools that can be used to promote and work with RRI.

Science in Society

Since 2002, VA and the SOM Institute at the University of Gothenburg have been collaborating on a Science in Society project. The aim is to monitor public attitudes to research and scientists over time and investigate what affects confidence and interest in science. The latest study examines in depth what the concept of confidence really means to the public, researchers and journalists.

Researchers' Night and Researchers' Grand Prix

On the last Friday of September each year, across Sweden, the public is invited to meet researchers at workshops, experiments, science shows, science cafés and much more. VA coordinates the Swedish events as part of European Researchers' Night, which aims to demonstrate how fun research can be and that scientists are ordinary people with extraordinary jobs. These include the regional heats of the Researchers' Grand Prix, in which researchers have just four minutes to present their research in an engaging and easy-to-understand way.

“ *If we don't participate in the media and communicate knowledge about science, someone else will.*

Professor **Ulf Ellervik**, speaking at a media seminar at Halmstad University in 2015.

JOIN OUR NETWORK!

Organisations as well as **individuals** are welcome to become members of VA. As a member you will receive regular information and invitations to seminars and other activities. Benefits also include access to studies and expert advice on science communication, and you are welcome to influence and take part in our work. Our broad network also provides opportunities for new collaborations.

Read more at www.v-a.se/membership

” VA makes a very important contribution and, in a fantastic way, complements the efforts of the Academy of Sciences to strengthen interest in research and the role of science in society.

Göran K. Hansson, Permanent Secretary of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

” We are members of VA because it enables young people in Sweden to find out about research and meet researchers in an easy and accessible way. We recognise that collaboration between academia and young people strengthens the work of youth organisations and can result in new research ideas.

Rebecka Prentell, Chair of the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU).

CONTACT US

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Read VA's latest news in English at: www.v-a.se/news

Receive VA's international newsletter: www.v-a.se/subscription

” *The Knowledge Foundation finances research and knowledge development, carried out in collaboration between academia and industry. Research plays a key role in strengthening Sweden's competitiveness, and VA's aim, to increase interaction between researchers and society, fits perfectly.*

Ulf Hall, Director of External Relations and Communications, the Knowledge Foundation.

AMATÖREXP

Vd, Stiftelsen

HELEN DANNETUN
Kerolinska Högskolelaboratoriet
Uppsala universitet

PLADH
Vetenskap & Allm



CALENDAR 2016

- 13 April **Science Communication Forum** in Gothenburg
- 26–28 April VA presentations at **PGST, Public Communication of Science and Technology Conference**, in Istanbul
- 5 July **Discussion seminar** at Almedalen week in Visby
- 25–27 July VA sessions at **ESOF, EuroScience Open Forum**, in Manchester
- 30 September **Researchers' Night** and regional finals of the **Researchers' Grand Prix**
- 12 October **VA Day** conference and **Annual General Meeting** in Stockholm
- November National final of the **Researchers' Grand Prix**
- December Annual **VA Barometer** published
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” *It was exciting to work with such a strong and committed team. Thanks to the pupils' help, we got a lot of data that we would otherwise have been unable to obtain.*

Judith Sarneel, researcher, was assisted by thousands of Swedish school pupils as part of the 2015 Researchers' Night mass experiment, the Tea Bag Experiment.