Universitas 21 (U21) is a leading global network of research-intensive universities that empowers its members to share excellence, collaborate across borders and nurture global knowledge exchange.

The RISE Awards is a competition for students and recent graduates. RISE stands for Real Impact on Society and Environment. The competition aims to showcase students' talent in sustainability and social innovation. The competition targets projects that address at least one of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Competition

An open call targeting students and recent graduates resulted in 12 project submissions. The 10 projects, which met the eligibility criteria, then presented—during a maximum of five minutes—to a live audience on 29 October 2019.

The topics included solutions on food waste reduction, plastic use reduction, solar panels for schools, desalination methods, machine learning for energy saving, grey water solutions, and social inclusion strategies.

Kristina Jönsson, Coordinator of 2030 Grad School, was the keynote speaker at the live event and spoke about the importance of the SDGs and initiatives like the RISE Awards.

In total, approximately 50 students, alumni, staff and community members attended the live event, as well as the head of the UNOPS Innovation Centre in Lund and staff members from Sony Start-up Acceleration programme.

Judging Criteria

The Lund University Education Board selected the winner of the local round. Their decision was based on the following criteria, set forth by U21: Project Focus (the issue); Originality (the idea); Project Reach (the impact); and Scalability (the impact). The winner of the local round will represent Lund University in the global round (virtual) of the RISE Awards. The global winner will be announced by U21 in January 2020.

RISE Award Winner

Lund University Competition Winner – Solar4Schools was selected as the winner of the local competition. Solar4Schools addresses SDG 4 (quality education) and 7 (affordable and clean energy) through the development of an automatic stand-alone solar system for schools in developing countries. The project was represented by Wenjing Yang, a recent graduate in the Masters in Innovation and Spatial Dynamics.

People’s Choice Award – During the live event, the audience selected GreyGrown as their favourite project. GreyGrown addresses SDG 1 (Cero Hunger), 3 (Good health and wellbeing), and 6 (Clean water and sanitation), by focusing on the filtration and reuse of household greywater for the irrigation of edible foods in nonsewered areas of developing countries. The project was represented by Tshepiso Lehutjo, a recent graduate in the Masters Programme in Water Resources Engineering.

RISE Awards Highlights

10 project finalists pitched the projects to a live audience on 29 October, 2019.

50 attendees at the event – including students, staff, alumni, community members, representatives from UNOPS Innovation Centre and Sony Start-up Acceleration Programme.

4 faculties represented among the project participants. These are Social Sciences, Humanities and Theology, Science, and Engineering.

Project teams consisted of Swedish and International students and alumni.

14 out of the 17 SDGs were represented in the selected finalists’ projects.

Special thanks to…

…the Lund University Education Board for selecting the winning project which will represent LU in the global round;

…VentureLab for hosting the live event, donating customised prizes;

…Kristina Jönsson from the Lund University 2030 Grad School who held a keynote speech at the live event about the importance of SDGs;

…TEDxLundUniversity for leading a workshop on ‘pitching skills’ for the 10 finalists.