

Challenging young minds

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This blog post is written by Kerstin Scragg, teacher at Celsiusskolan in Uppsala.



Me and Erik, one of the high school students from SLU Youth Institute.

I have had the great pleasure to join SLU Youth Institute in Des Moines, Iowa, to participate at Global Youth Institute and the World Food Prize conference which focuses on future food security. We have enjoyed inspiring talks and lectures, participated in different workshops and our two Swedish high school students have presented essays at a round table conversation together with other students and experts in respective field. I work as a teacher at a high school in Uppsala and this trip really started a year ago when I signed my class up to write the Global Youth Institute's Global Challenge essay. The overall topic of these essays is the UN's sustainable development goal 2, End Hunger. The students chose a country with food insecurity related problems, in addition, they described the food security situation in the country and explained what is currently being done to battle these issues. In the end, they handed their essays in to SLU Youth Institute where some were chosen to participate in one of three round table conversations, given at each campus. One, out of these twenty-five students at each round table conversation, was elected to go to the U.S. to present the essay and take part of the Global Youth Institute conference in Des Moines, so here we are.

At the Global Youth Institute in Des Moines, we have enjoyed several interesting talks and presentations by leading figures in the battle of ending hunger globally, such as the CEO at the African Bank, the United States Secretary of Agriculture, this years' World Food Prize laureates and many more. One example of a lecture was when we learned more about deep space

travelling and some challenges feeding the crew during these journeys. Another interesting lecture taught us how artificial intelligence, AI, can help women in agriculture.



Maja and Erik at the House of Laureates

What I find inspiring is how these, about a hundred teenagers, are at the very centre of it all. Whether it being the content of the talks or activities chosen, all is relevant and elaborated for these possible future researchers and policy makers and, despite the long days, seems to succeed in engaging them no matter the topic. It is truly luxurious to watch and take part in these days, which I am sure will shape these young minds for a long time. This is not only an important investment for the future but also a way to let these students know how much they matter.

We are probably all aware of some of the challenges that Swedish schools face, such as large class sizes, which leads to the fact that it can be difficult to challenge gifted students every lesson. During this conference students are just that, they are challenged both socially and intellectually. To me, seeing my student, along with the others, being stimulated and inspired by the activities and talks at the Global Youth Institute, has been the most rewarding part of the journey and I can only hope I get to send more students to Global Youth Institute in the future.

SLU Youth Institute (SLU YI) aims to create interest among Swedish youth for global food security and to find sustainable solutions to the global challenges based on the UN Sustainable

Development Goals. SLU Youth Institute is the Swedish part of many Youth Institutes coordinated by the World Food Prize Foundation. [Read more at our Swedish website!](#)