

Strategic plan SIB-Utrecht

Introduction

This strategic plan aims to help SIB-Utrecht cast a glance into the future, in order to fortify the association. The unique combination of intellect and *Utrechtse gezelligheid* is what makes our association one of a kind and worth preserving. Preserving however, does not always entail a conservatist stance towards the structure of the association, but often calls for change in order to look after what we hold dear. This plan paints a picture for the upcoming years, to ensure that upcoming SIB boards, in addition to their own input, can act consistently.

This plan does not stand on its own, and will kick off the start of the beginning of a number of long-term plans. Once this document is voted in, the current board will present a list with deadlines during the election GMA; which multi-annual plan needs to be finished when. Once again, the contents of these multiple-annual plans are up to the boards for which the deadlines are set.

This plan will not only identify existing problems, but also make suggestions for the coming boards of SIB-Utrecht. These suggestions, named 'spot on the horizon', are based on conversations with members during Member Consultation Moments, and overall observations of the association. Keep in mind that the future is not set in stone, and that the suggestions made are merely guidelines; a place towards which we can travel, though how that happens will be decided by coming boards.

Here is a short summary of the subsections of this strategic plan, ranked in order of importance. When deciding the order of this list, we looked at what had the most influence on the continuance of the association, and what issues were most pressing. The plans at the top of this list have the most impact on the association as it is currently exists, meaning those issues need attention first:

- Member recruitment
- Talks

- Finances
 - Income
 - Expenses
- Member bonding
- Program II
 - Activities
 - Trips

Member recruitment

SIB had some great years with a lot of new members, but also less successful years. This is mainly because of the pandemic and thus should not be a problem, as long as we have a plan to get out of the covid dip again. The first introduction period, for which members are recruited mainly during the UIT, is the most successful. During the second and third introduction period, SIB grows with a handful of members. In some years, there was a fourth introduction period, but this often yields only a single new member (see table 1). The declining results of member recruitment have an effect on the following points:

Finances: Over the past few years, SIB has received less member contribution, meaning that we are more reliant on sponsors. For some activities, costs are relatively high when few members join. For example, when a room has to be rented; the fewer attendees, the higher the costs per attendee. Or when a game like Cluedo is bought, the costs per person are higher when there are less attendees than budgeted. Concluding, less members means more pressure on the finances.

The filling of committees and board: SIB has a large number of committees that organize various activities. All committees must be filled, but due to a shortage of members it is quite difficult to do so. As a result, members often join multiple committees, which demands a lot from the members and compromises the 'casual' character of the association. In addition to this, finding a 6-member board is becoming increasingly difficult.

Spot on the horizon: What should be done is a re-evaluation of how SIB is promoted externally. Using the Core Research (Van Wetten, 2020-2021), the UIT and introduction periods should be adjusted, to make sure they reflect SIB's identity. Especially during the UIT, we are holding

on to traditions that are not as effective as they used to be and should thus be evaluated, according to the member consultation moments. Part of the problem will likely disappear when the pandemic ends, but we cannot completely put our hopes on that, because larger associations are still growing even under these circumstances. A new promotion plan can make SIB more attractive and hopefully compensate for the loss of last years.

Table 1: Registrations per introduction period

	September	November	March	June	Total
2021-2022	28	8	N/A	-	36
2020-2021	16	3	2	1	22
2019-2020	49	4	3	-	58
2018-2019	45*	4	6	-	55
2017-2018	50	8	7	-	65

* This number was somewhere between 40 and 50 and is therefore an estimate.

Talks

The past two years we have seen a decline in the attendance numbers of our program of talks, as seen in table 2. During the Member Consultation Moments it also became clear that the enthusiasm for the talks in their current form has declined. This has an impact on the following aspects:

Finances: The program of talks is partly financed by funds. However, the decline in visitor numbers means that the promotion of the organizations that grant our funds reaches fewer people. This means that it is becoming increasingly difficult to ask for funding, because we have less to offer to the organizations than before; less visitors means less brand awareness, which therefore makes the program of Talks less financially feasible.

Member bonding: We noticed that a substantial number of our members do not feel connected to the current form of our program of talks, which could be due to multiple reasons, such as the topics or formats of the talks and COVID-19. In some cases, this is problematic for

the bonding of our members, since some members infrequently visit talks and thus won't come into much contact with members that do frequently visit our talks.

Motivation of the EAC (External Affairs Committee): the EAC put a lot of effort and time in arranging a varied and interesting program of talks. During our EAC meetings it turned out that it is often demotivating to do this for a small group of people, and demotivates members to join the committee. The last also shows that the enthusiasm for the program of talks has declined.

Speakers: It can be discouraging for speakers to prepare a talk at which the attendance numbers are lower than expected. Speakers put their time and effort in preparing and giving a talk voluntarily, and thereafter giving the talk to just a small group of people might not be what they hoped for.

Spot on the horizon: The program of talks in its current format should be evaluated. This is something that the EAC has already started with, together with the PC (Promotion Committee), IAC (Internal Affairs Committee), member consultation moments, and the board. After finishing this evaluation certain steps can be made in order to work on some problems that were established during the evaluation. These steps will hopefully lead to an increase in the attendance of our program of talks.

Table 2: Average attendance per year

Year	Average attendance
2017-2018	59,0
2018-2019	57,1
2019-2020	72,6
2020-2021	28,0
2021-2022	26,4

Finances

Income

Member Contribution

When looking at our annual budget, yearly expenses do not necessarily increase at the same rate that the yearly income would increase for every extra member (figure 1). This means that having fewer members puts more pressure on our budget and forces us to have an increased reliance on our subsidies, sponsors, and reserves to make ends meet.

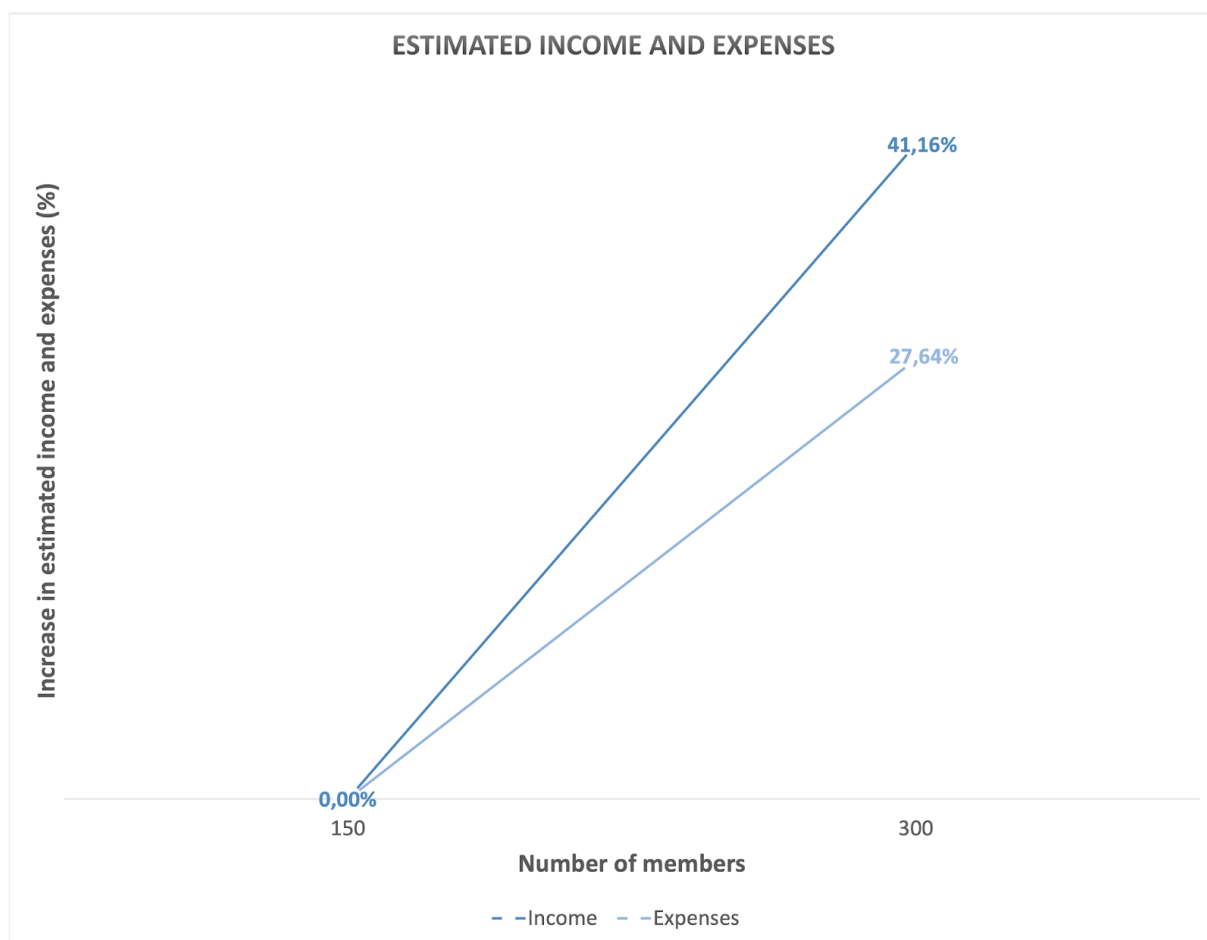


Figure 1. An estimation of how much our annual income and expenses would increase if we were to double the number of members we have. The horizontal axis shows 150 (close to our current number of members) and 300 members. The vertical axis shows the estimated increase in annual income and expenses as a percentage of our budget for 150 members.

Sponsoring

After the loss of our long-standing structural sponsor CIMSOLUTIONS, a significant effort has been put into finding a similar structural sponsor. Looking at both our association and how



businesses work in our current day and age, it is highly unlikely another sponsor like CIMSOLUTIONS will be found. Firstly, SIB-Utrecht is not as attractive to business as other student associations are: We currently have too few members to actively promote to, and our association is unfortunately not niche enough to acquire sponsors that would specifically fit in with our members and activities. Also, businesses nowadays have many ways of promoting themselves that are often more effective and cost less money than sponsoring an association: think of social media campaigns, influencers, promotion at relevant events, etc.

Spot on the horizon: the sources of income have to be re-evaluated to determine which one can realistically provide us with the money we need to function as an association. More effort can then be put into optimizing the viable sources of income.

Expenses

Budget

The loss of CIMSOLUTIONS caused a large decrease in our annual income, and will thus force us to look at our budget and re-evaluate which expenses are not essential for the survival of SIB. Many posts on our annual expense budget in the past years have been estimated inaccurately when comparing the budget to what was spent at the end of the year. Furthermore, many posts on our annual budget cost more than what they return in value: think of Committee T-shirts, Tuesday Twists, Utrecht Introduction Time, etc.

Spot on the horizon: Our spending budget has to be re-evaluated to determine if our estimated spending is accurate to our realized spending, and to make sure costs and benefits of each post are balanced. We could think of only reimbursing a percentage of the printing costs for committee shirts, or letting only certain committees purchase a committee shirt. We could also look at our Tuesday Twist program to determine which activities were most popular and put more effort into organizing those kinds of activities, which would increase attendance and thus increase what the Tuesday Twists return in value for our association.



Member bonding

This year, 27.3% of our members have become so-called “sleeping members”, meaning they are inactive members. This has an effect on the following points:

Committees: with lower numbers of active members, committees have become harder to fill. This increases the workload of the existing committees and has created instances where committees have to be dissolved. More committees and larger committees allow for a wider range of activities as well as a higher quality of activities, which will contribute to an increase of active members.

Activities: with fewer active members, the presence has been low. With a larger group of active members, the presence at activities will also go up.

Board: with fewer active members, forming a board has increased in difficulty. This is evident in the current board consisting of five people, instead of the usual six. With more active members, the pool of people to form a board from will increase.

Spot on the horizon: Part of the problem in bonding a high percentage of members could be the commitment-free identity of our association. To improve bonding, this part of SIB’s identity could be reevaluated to determine what is best for SIB’s future. Furthermore, an evaluation of the current forms of bonding to determine how we currently achieve bonding, to then create a concrete plan to innovate and improve member bonding to suit SIB’s identity best.

Program II

Activities

As of recent, in both online and offline activities, we have unfortunately noticed a decline in attendance, with sometimes only 3-5 people attending besides the Board and the organizing committee. As this happens too often, the program as is, is not sustainable. We currently do not have the capacity to organize activities every week, and have a decent turnout. This affects the motivation within committees to energetically organize activities every month or two months.



Spot on the horizon: We need to evaluate if we want to continue the weekly activities program with the current capacity. Is it worth the effort? Does it always work out? If it turns out that we do want to continue, we have to figure out a way to make activities more attractive, by looking at what attracted people the most in the past couple of years.

Trips

Every year we organize a minimum of three trips. Every trip a relatively small amount of the association joins, whilst a large part of our budget is reserved for trips. With short trips, the attendance is higher than with longer trips, thus making them more viable. For long trips, the money we are spending in comparison to the amount of people signing up is not in balance.

Spot on the horizon: We need to evaluate yearly what the association's capacity is regarding possible attendees and finances. What is viable and to what extent do we want to use our trips to profile ourselves?