

2021 Annual Report

Gothenburg Artificial Intelligence Alliance

Our third year

2021 was the third year for GAIA as a non-profit organisation. We can only describe it as an off-year due to the heavy influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this report, we describe the year that passed and our outlook for the coming year.

Board and Auditor

During the year, the GAIA board consisted of Jakob Andersson (chairman), Josef Lindman Hörnlund (treasurer), Josefin Scott (secretary), Amanda Nilsson, Anna Katariina Wisakanto, and Viktor Olsbo. Daniel Sääf was the auditor.

Members

One can join GAIA as a member by registering through our webpage and paying the membership fee. In the period between the last annual meeting (2020-12-15) – when the meeting set the price – until writing this report, 46 people joined as members.

COVID-19

The pandemic has been challenging for most organisations, especially those working with events and networking like GAIA. During our operational year of 2021, the government banned physical events in Sweden. We, therefore, had to make do with online events. Online events can reach a much larger audience, but the networking aspect is lost. Since most companies who host meetups want to network with the attendees, often for recruitment (which also has not been on top of most companies' minds due to the pandemic), finding speakers has been challenging. Also, the double cancellation of the 2020 conference and the lack of interaction with the members tested our organisers' motivation. All in all, we only hosted two events this year besides the virtual conference. We also decided to not host any conference during 2021 and instead focus our energy on 2022 when the pandemic hopefully allows us to organise the grand physical conference at Svenska Mässan we originally planned for 2020.

Our events

During the year, we only had two smaller events and one virtual conference. The first meetup was together with Recorded Future and the second with Chalmers. They averaged 72 attendees.

It was tough finding speakers during the pandemic as many companies struggle themselves and thus are reluctant to spend time on events, but also since much of the value for our partners stems from networking.

As of this writing, we just (the operational year of 2022) hosted our first physical event since the pandemic began. It was great seeing everyone again!

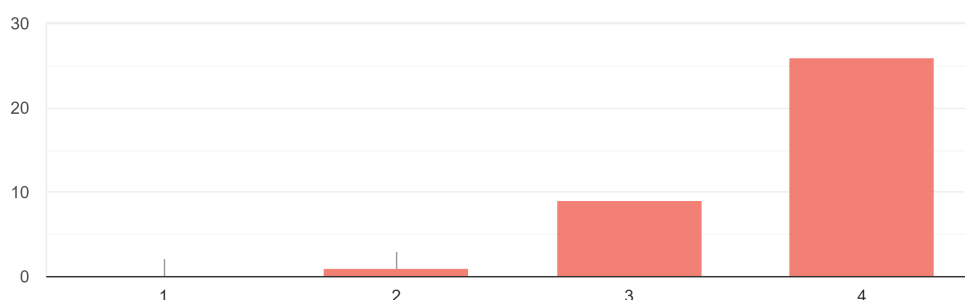
The 2020 GAIA Conference

We already described the 2020 GAIA Conference in the previous annual report as we hosted it before the annual meeting. It was the primary event this year. On November 27, 2020, we hosted the virtual GAIA Conference from a studio at Svenska Mässan. With more than 700 registered participants, it was a great success. The full-day track was streamed on our YouTube channel and remains available there.

We created virtual booths for our gold and startup partners consisting of a company page on the conference site and a Slack channel for interaction with the attendees. The partners were happy afterwards, and we heard some call it the best digital event they partnered with yet. We are delighted with that sentiment as it is challenging to provide a good experience for partners and a substitute for the networking part of a physical conference.

Also, the participants were pleased with the event. As seen in the response below to the survey we sent after the event, most participants were excited afterwards (note, the scale is 1–4). Based on the comments, people are happy with the speakers, format, and interaction in the YouTube chat and on Slack.

The overall impression of the conference
36 svar



Financially, we offered the tickets for free, and we heavily discounted the partnerships. A bronze package remained at 10,000 SEK as it never contained a booth. We merged the platinum, gold, and silver packages from the original conference into a digital gold package with a virtual booth. For that package, we charged 20,000 SEK, which we also offered as a discount if the company opts for a gold package or above (60,000 SEK) at the next physical conference. We sold eight gold, four bronze, and one startup package for the digital conference providing an income of 201,000 SEK.

The conference made a positive financial result. That is above our initial expectations and means our buffer remains untouched. We thus have a good outlook for the coming year and the next GAIA Conference.

Finance

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on our financial activities during the fiscal year 2021. We managed to create a profitable virtual conference. However, the size of the conference was much smaller than initially planned. The uncertainty about the future caused by the pandemic made the board put off any investments during the year.

We made a profit of 73,780.20 SEK, a margin of 36%. 2020 and 2021 viewed together corresponds to a slight loss of -1,892.80 SEK.

Our buffer from the 2019 GAIA Conference remains. It is a great safety net for the association. GAIA stands strong as we hope to return to physical events.

Final Words

We look back at 1,5 challenging years with the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of writing, everything looks hopeful. Vaccines are available, and the pandemic seems to be relenting. We just hosted our first physical event since January 2020. Anything could still happen, but it is clear that the energy is back among our organisers, the community, and the companies.

The board reflected during the year on the state of the community. A lot has changed since our meetups started and since we formed GAIA. It is clear to us that the community has matured. Many now work with machine learning and data science; it is not an unknown field anymore. Although meetups likely have their place in the future, we believe they will be more targeted towards sub-fields such as NLP and computer vision. We also think we need something else in addition. We have therefore started investigating small, self-organising network groups around specific topics. Stay tuned for more information about that in 2022.

Our quest to make Gothenburg a leading AI region continues. Curiosity and progress orientation will take our community a long way!

Gothenburg, 2021-11-02

Jakob Andersson
Chairman

Josef Lindman Hörnlund
Treasurer

Josefin Scott
Secretary

Amanda Nilsson
Board Member

Anna Katariina Wisakanto
Board Member

Viktor Olsbo
Board Member