

High-quality education and world-class universities **attract skilled experts**

By investing in universities, we strengthen the virtuous circle that benefits us all



RDI investments generate innovations that help us stop the accumulation of debt

Bildung creates resilience, which helps us navigate through unpredictable times

Unifi's objectives for the 2023-2027 parliamentary term

Investment in universities is an investment for the future

Investments in universities pay for themselves many times over. Research-based education cultivates experts capable of making new innovations. Innovations, in turn, generate more tax revenue. This allows us to maintain our welfare society, which both cultivates and attracts highly educated future experts. Research and education strengthen the Finnish welfare society, competitiveness and resilience. By investing in universities in the next parliamentary term, we strengthen the virtuous circle that benefits us all.

RDI investments generate innovations **that help us stop the accumulation of debt**

The challenges for Finland's public finances, as well as climate change and biodiversity loss force us to look for new solutions and new sources for sustainable growth. In December 2021, all political parties committed themselves to working towards raising investments in research, development and innovation to 4% of Finland's GDP by 2030.

If Finland wants to succeed in the competition for international research funding and attracting RDI investments, the quality of research and the number of experts must be raised constantly. We need more highly educated people and researchers. By the end of this decade, we will need hundreds or maybe even a thousand new doctoral graduates every year for demanding RDI expert work. Doctoral education and the recruitment of doctors will have a twofold impact: Both the level of competence and the number of experts will increase.

Therefore, we must:

- Increase the public core funding of universities so that we can increase doctoral education.
- Strengthen the research infrastructures to attract new researchers.
- Increase funding for high-quality scientific research (Academy of Finland).
- Focus RDI funding (Business Finland) on joint research between universities and companies which generates new innovations and internationally attractive knowledge and innovation ecosystems.
- Ensure that legislative reforms do not cause any impediments for conducting research.

High-quality education and world-class **universities attract new experts**

The Finnish population is ageing rapidly. We already have the greatest shortage of highly educated workers in the OECD countries. For a long time, the education level of young adults in Finland has remained unchanged. At the same time, it has risen in many other countries we consider our peers.

In order to maintain a well-functioning welfare society, work productivity must increase, which requires more people with higher education. Education is also an effective way to prevent inequality. With high-quality education, we can attract international students and researchers to Finland.

European University Association's (EUA) Public Funding Observatory has shown that Finland's public funding for universities decreased consistently in relation to GDP during the last decade. In other Nordic countries, funding grew more than GDP.

Therefore, we must:

- Increase public funding for universities in relation to the number of students and the development of GDP so that it follows the same upward trend as in our peer countries.
- Fully finance the increased intake of students by increasing the core funding of universities.
- Assign separate resources for the reform and implementation of continuous learning.
- Better attract and support the integration of international students and researchers
- Further develop the roles of universities and universities of applied sciences according to their respective profiles and with an emphasis on their mutually supportive strengths.

Bildung creates resilience, which helps **us navigate through unpredictable times**

We are living in a time filled with crises. Predicting what competences and skills are needed in the future is becoming increasingly difficult. Research creates understanding and new knowledge, and it helps us find solutions to the challenges we are facing now and to challenges we have not yet identified. It is, therefore, important that we carry out research on a broad range of issues and phenomena. Universities build preparedness and Finland's strategic reserve of knowledge and expertise.

If we want to properly utilise research-based knowledge in society, we need practices and services in open science, as well as close dialogue between researchers and decision-makers. Let us therefore build a more resilient Finland by building research and education policy that extends across parliamentary terms.

Therefore, we must:

- Commit to a multiannual RDI funding plan.
- Ensure RDI continuity: The Research and Innovation Council (TIN) monitors the implementation of the RDI funding plan and prepares a research and innovation policy report.
- Extend the timespan and strategic nature of the education policy.
- Make the role of research and education visible in Finland's foreign policy and actively participate in the research, innovation and education policy of the EU.
- Make better use of research-based knowledge in decision-making.