

The fundamentals of sustaining public trust in universities: promoting research integrity

Case study #3: sustaining public confidence in a new university: what works and what doesn't? Aalto University, Finland

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**Sustaining public
confidence in a new
university: A balancing act
or did we sell our soul?**

Case Aalto University

Pure intellectual interest v. societal service and relevance

Traditional view: IVORY TOWER = a sanctuary for pure intellectual endeavours, detached from the rest of the society and its mundane concerns.

AALTO UNIVERSITY was founded to strengthen the innovative capacity of Finland through first class research, art and education and by integrating the university's core activities in societal and economic development. Today, Aalto University is a new kind of research university with open co-creation platforms for innovation, societal relevance and economic competitiveness.

Is there a contradiction with serving truth and serving society?

The ethos of science (e.g. Merton):

- Communism: common ownership of intellectual property
- Universalism: the validity of a scientific claim is independent of the status of individuals making the claim
- Disinterestedness: scientific institutions act for the benefit of a common scientific enterprise
- Organised scepticism: scientific claims should be exposed to critical scrutiny before being accepted

Aalto University

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Shaping a
sustainable future



Aalto-yliopisto
Aalto-universitetet
Aalto University



Merger of three leading Finnish universities

1849

**Helsinki University
of Technology**

1871

**University of Art
and Design Helsinki**

1911

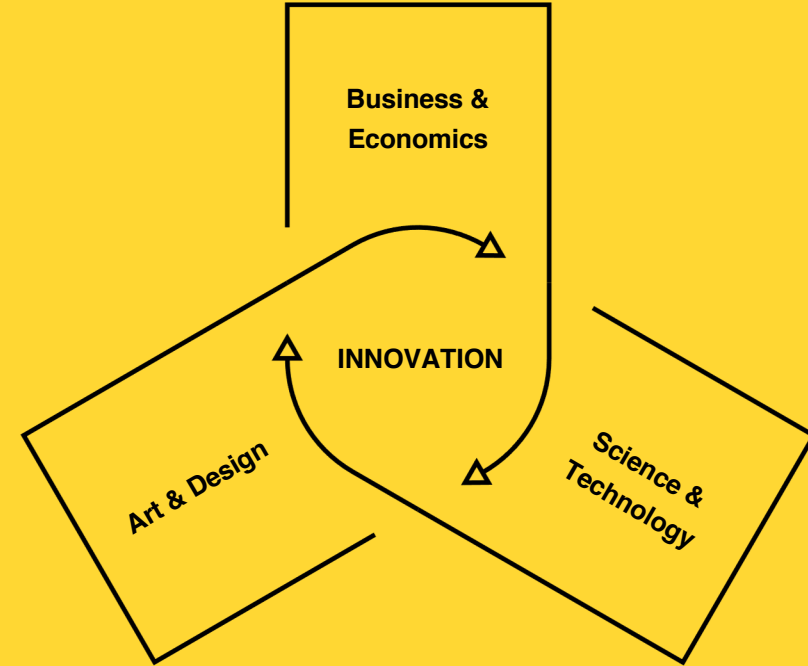
**Helsinki School
of Economics**

**Aalto
University**

2010

We embarked on a mission

- By merging three leading universities in 2010, Aalto was founded to work as a societally embedded, and innovative research university for a better world
- Aalto has a national mission to strengthen Finland's innovative capacity through first-class research and education



Our purpose: Shaping a sustainable future

Aalto University is founded on high-quality research, education, impact as well as shared values of responsibility, courage and collaboration.

We solve global challenges by bringing talent together across science, art, technology, and business.



Our three cross-cutting approaches

Focus of development: We help solve grand challenges in and across our key areas. We build an outstanding creative community for new thinking. We foster an inspiring entrepreneurial culture.



Solutions for sustainability

Actions: **Connecting our strengths to create solutions for grand challenges, pioneering sustainable solutions in our operations**



Radical creativity

Actions: **Empowering an experimental culture by building the spaces and practices that encourage us to break boundaries and create novel perspectives**



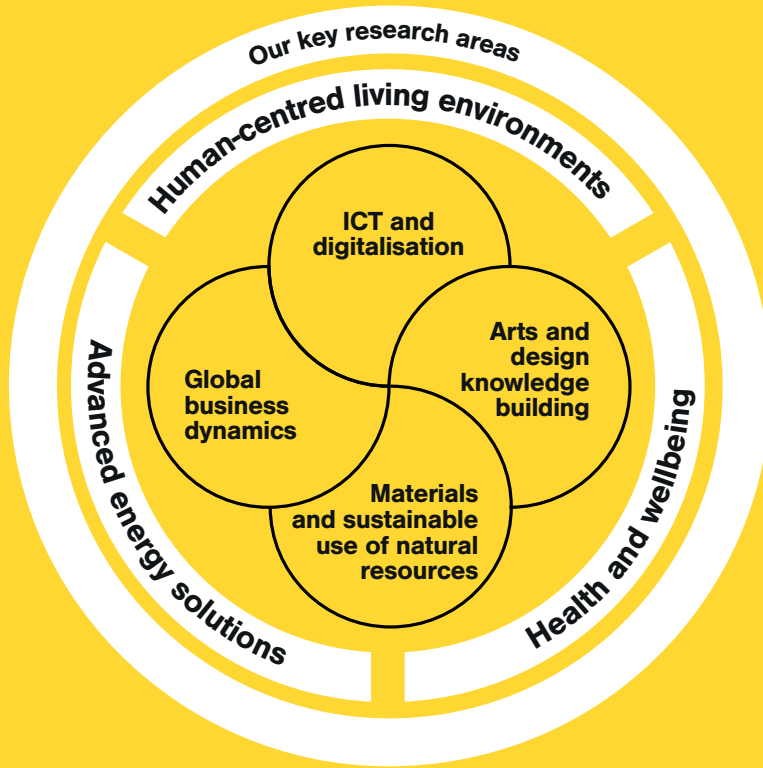
Entrepreneurial mindset

Actions: **Advancing entrepreneurial capabilities throughout our community, supporting student-driven activities and initiatives**

Research

Driving excellence

Research



We excel and make breakthroughs in and across science, art, technology and business

Focus of development: Driving excellence

We create world-class clusters of excellence in our key research areas and bring complementary talent together to work on grand challenges.

Actions: Attracting and fostering talent, developing selected research infrastructures, new collaboration across fields

Attractive career paths

We are on the lookout for people who want to change the world. Our tenure track system for professors is an internationally recognised academic career system with clear steps, in which more junior researchers can also compete.

A background photograph showing a group of people in a modern, industrial-style setting. A man in a light blue shirt and glasses is seated on the left, looking down at a laptop. A woman with short blonde hair and glasses is seated on the right, looking towards the man. Another person is partially visible in the foreground on the right, seen from the back. They are sitting on orange armchairs in front of a wall made of vertical wooden slats.

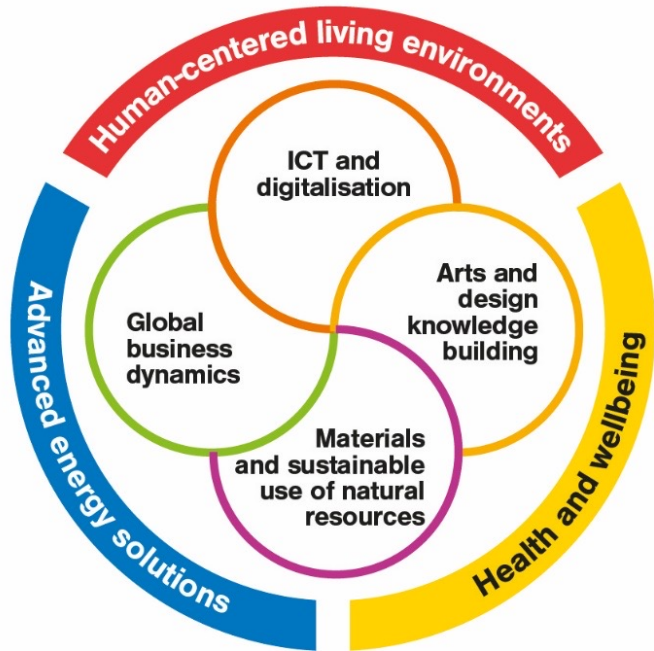
280

tenure track
recruitments since 2010

70%

of applicants are from
outside Finland

Excellence in all key research areas



ICT and digitalisation

ShanghaiRanking: Telecommunication Engineering 40
NTU: Computer science 64

Global business dynamics

ShanghaiRanking: Management 31
Business administration 25

Advanced energy solutions

QS: Electrical & electronic engineering 79

Materials and sustainable use of natural resources

QS: Materials Science 98
US News: Polymer Science 54

Human-centred living environments

QS: Architecture/Built environment 42
ShanghaiRanking: Marine/Ocean engineering 39

Arts and design knowledge building

QS: Art & design 6

Health and wellbeing

ShanghaiRanking: Medical technology 101–150



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Aalto-universitetet
Aalto University

International recognition

9th

**of all young universities
globally**

QS 2021 World University
Rankings 50 Under 50

23rd

**in multidisciplinary and
collaborative research**

World University Research
Rankings 2020

37th

**most international university in
the world**

THE Most International Universities
Ranking 2020

47th

**in advancing responsible
consumption and production**

UN SDG #9 – THE University
Impact Ranking 2021

Artistic excellence

**Art & design education
ranked 6th in the world**

QS 2021

**Fashion Programme
amongst the best in the
world**

The Business of Fashion 2019

**Students have excelled
in the annual *Designers'
Nest* competition for
7 consecutive years**

**Students reach the final
of *Hyères Fashion
Festival* 8 years in a row**

Education

Future-led learning

Game changers of tomorrow

- Global challenges require professionals with the capabilities to build a sustainable society and increase wellbeing through disruptive change.





Globally attractive programmes

- We offer top-class education in the fields of science, arts, technology, and business.
- Multidisciplinary studies are integrated into programmes offered as University-wide studies (UWS).
- Between 2016–2019, over 400 Master's students participated annually in student exchanges or internship programmes abroad.



Learning at all stages

- We offer over 200 courses and programmes for lifewide learning, ranging from individual MOOCs to comprehensive degrees.
- We aim at experimental and participatory learning: students, faculty and our partners solve real-life challenges together.

Impact Inspiring ecosystem

A unique collaboration hub

Meilahti
Health
Campus

University of
Helsinki

Maria 01
Startups

Ruoholahti
Business
District

Aalto
University

Keilaniemi
Business Park

Collaboration hub

Vibrant entrepreneurial community

AALTO
VENTURES
PROGRAM

A!
Aalto University
Startup Center

G R
a
— D

A?
Aalto University
Design Factory

AENT
Aalto University
Developing Entrepreneurship

Aaltoes

DASH

**Fall
Up**

JUNCTION

KILAS

SLUSH

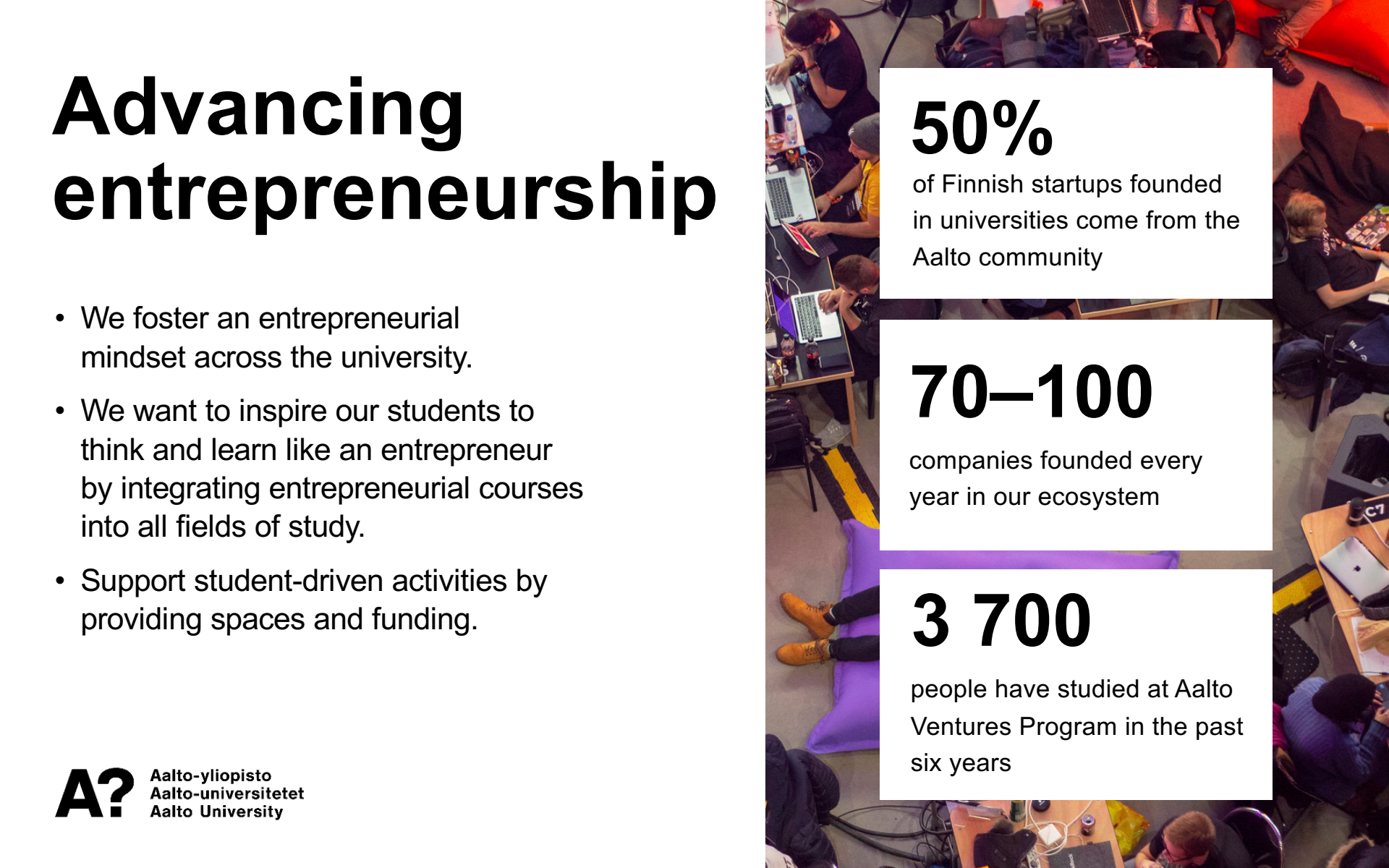
startuplifers

- Low-hierarchy culture with empowered students: driving force behind the entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Slush, one of the world's largest startup events, and Europe's leading hackathon Junction were born in Aalto's student community.

A! Aalto-yliopisto
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Advancing entrepreneurship

- We foster an entrepreneurial mindset across the university.
- We want to inspire our students to think and learn like an entrepreneur by integrating entrepreneurial courses into all fields of study.
- Support student-driven activities by providing spaces and funding.



50%

of Finnish startups founded in universities come from the Aalto community

70–100

companies founded every year in our ecosystem

3 700

people have studied at Aalto Ventures Program in the past six years

From ideas to impact

- Good ideas turn into great business in Aalto's multiple incubators and accelerators.
- Aalto University Innovation Services and Aalto Startup Center form a path to entrepreneurship for Aalto-based research innovations.
- Many of the most promising, innovative research-based startups in Finland originate from the Aalto ecosystem.*

*in 2020, 2 out of 5 most funded Finnish startups were Aalto-based



ICEYE

IQM

Strategic corporate partners

The ABB logo consists of the letters 'ABB' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly stylized, with the 'B' having a unique shape.The NESTE logo features the word 'NESTE' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are closely spaced and have a modern, clean appearance.The NOKIA logo displays the word 'NOKIA' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are well-spaced and have a classic, recognizable look.The SAAB logo is the word 'SAAB' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are thick and have a strong, industrial feel.

With our strategic corporate partners, we strive for a sustainable future by building capacity and investing in mutually beneficial, long-term collaboration.

The Aalto Way of Working

attracts **growing international recognition.**

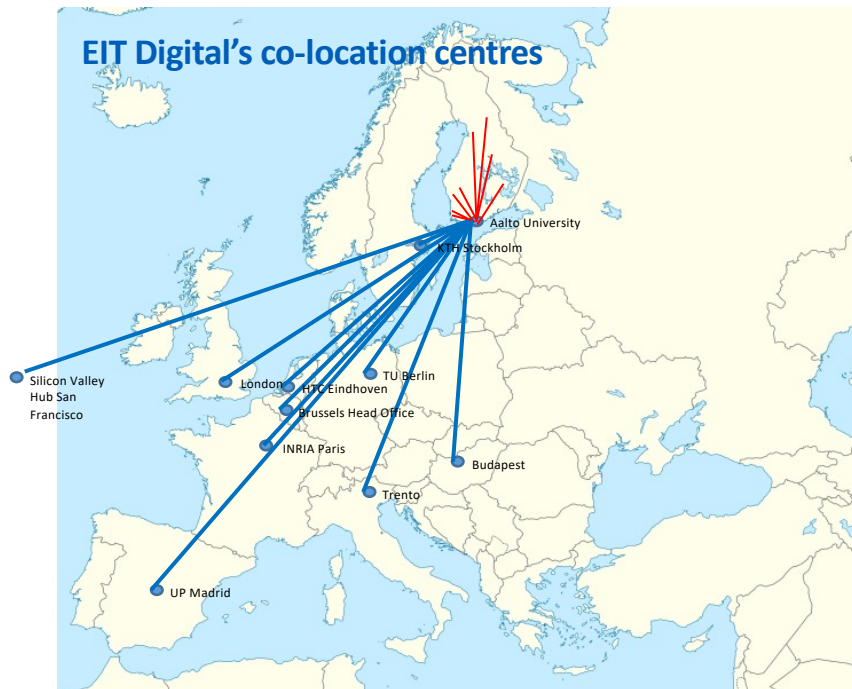
- In 2014, a report commissioned by MIT identified the Aalto University E&I ecosystem as one of the five emerging world leaders.
- In 2017, a report by JRC portrayed the Aalto-driven Espoo E&I ecosystem as a possible role model for Europe.
- In 2019, a study by EUA highlighted Aalto University as an example of the role of universities in pioneering regional innovation ecosystems.
- In 2021, a JRC report on the innovation impact of universities portrayed Aalto University as an example of a novel, innovative university.



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- The background image shows a university courtyard. In the foreground, two men are sitting on a low concrete wall, talking. A blue bicycle is parked to the left. In the background, several red umbrellas are open, and other people are visible. The scene is outdoors with trees and a brick building in the distance.
- **Open and low-hierarchy co-creation** with external partners in research, art, education and impact.
 - **Multidisciplinary**, academically ambitious approach to relevance-driven questions.
 - **Putting students in focus**
 - trusting students and empowering them to take a central role in the university community and beyond.

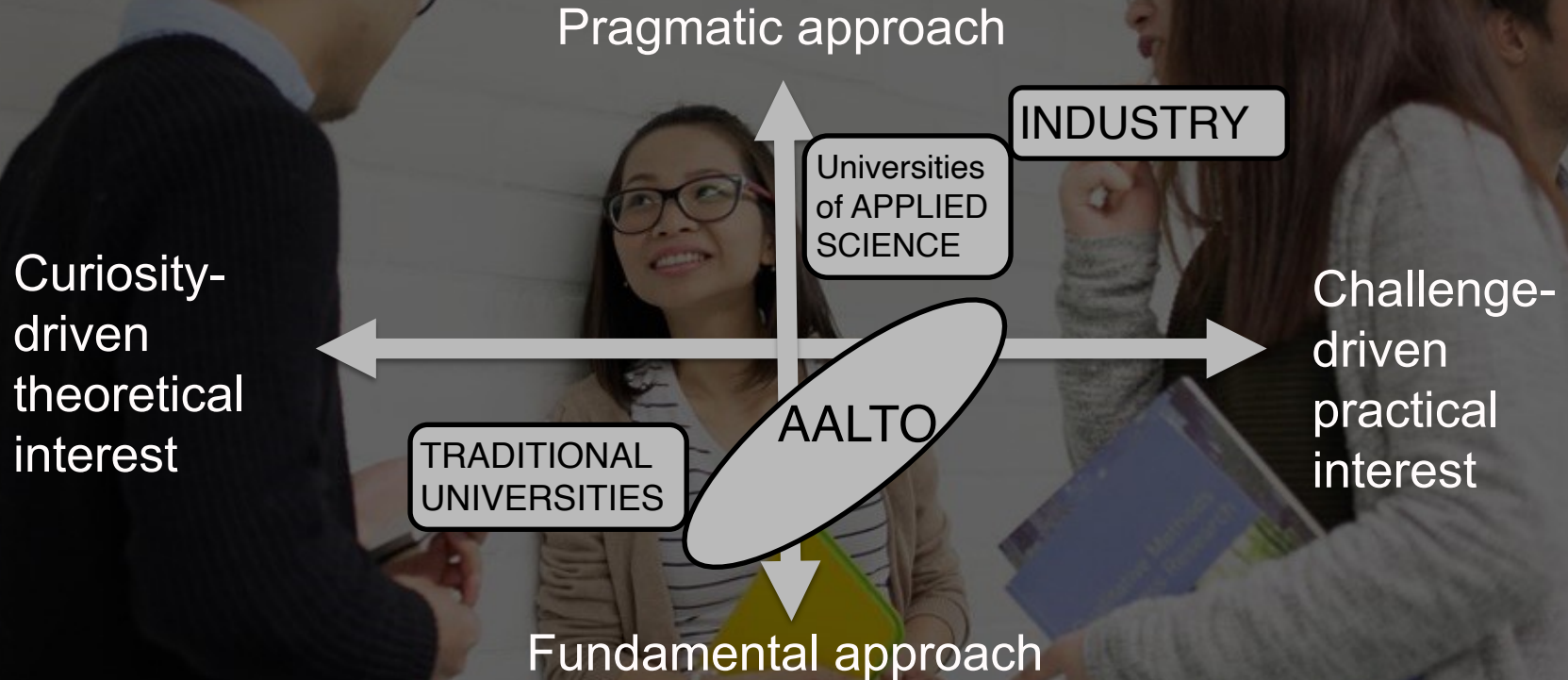
Aalto University links its national collaborators with leading international networks



Example: The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

- More than 1000 partners: companies, universities, research institutes, cities and regions.
- Aalto University participates in 6 EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities:
 - EIT Digital
 - EIT Raw Materials
 - EIT Climate
 - EIT InnoEnergy
 - EIT Urban Mobility
 - EIT Manufacturing

Identity of Aalto University: Combining academic rigour with societal relevance



Sustaining public confidence in a new university: What works and what doesn't?

The new kid on the block

Aalto entered the Finnish university scene as a

- a new kind of university (after merger, mission to increase innovation) and
- the spearhead of the Finnish university reform with
- extra public funding.



The new kid on the block

There has been a persistent need to prove our value to the country and national economy:

We have been assigned a national mission.

and communicate tirelessly but humbly about our activities:

We provide services for the whole Finland.

→ Constant improvements in our communications and constant dialogue with political decision makers at regional and national level, with business partners, other universities, but also the wider public.

What If...



- Research comms campaign provoking imagination by asking the question “what if?”
- Videos, micro-sites, podcasts, exhibitions.
- Awarded as best university communications campaign in Europe, 2018.

Aalto Effect



- Storified the findings of Aalto's external Research, Art and Impact Assessment
- Developed in-house with student illustrators, highlighting our strategic themes.
- Produced as a book in 2 languages and distributed to schools, media, influencers and through fundraising channels.

Everyone is a communicator

- **Communications trainings for faculty:**
 - Comms 101 clinics for all
 - Advanced trainings for academic leaders
- **Democratising our website:**
 - 800 editors from across the university
 - Clinics, Teams channel, direct support service
- **Our blogs, Aalto Podcasts: platforms for faculty, students and staff to further their reach**

Furthering the reach of our academic community's own voice.

Ourblogs.aalto.fi site hosts the blogs written by members of Aalto University: faculty, staff and students. Visiting bloggers are invited by Aalto community members.

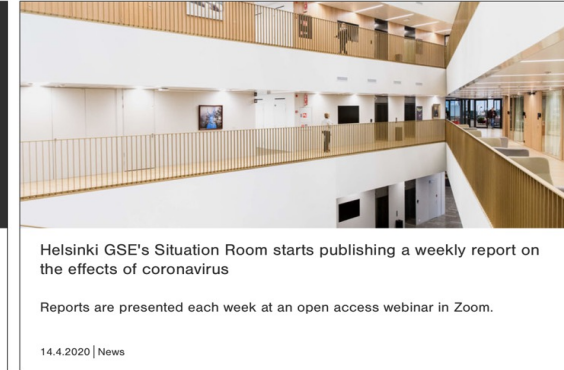
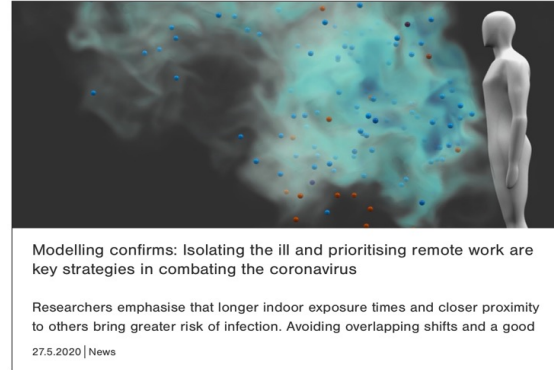
Our blogs is multilingual: the platform and general instructions will be in English to serve the whole community. However, each blogger and author can freely choose the language in which they publish.



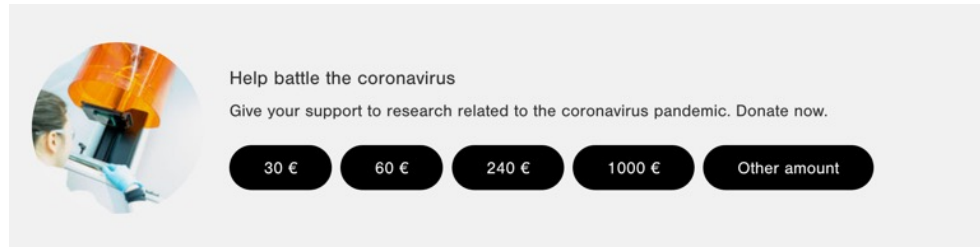
Case Covid-19: Aalto Helps

- In March 2020, an *Aalto Helps* website was launched for the Aalto community to submit their ideas on how to help with the corona crisis
- Dozens of ideas and proposals were submitted within a few months
- **Three major approaches:**
 - Modelling the pandemic & spread of the virus
 - Developing quick solutions for corona-related problems
 - Support to economic policy-making

Our ongoing corona-related research projects



Call for donors:





Aalto University

Ae_i

AALTO ECONOMIC INSTITUTE

<https://www.aaltoei.fi>

Ae_i

IMPACT:

Mutually beneficial collaboration

- Impact on society
- Impact on teaching
- Based on research

MOTIVATION:

Building a better society

- Quantitative analysis combined with the economics tool set
- Supporting decision making in the public and the private sector
- Input to teaching, research, student recruitment

CONCEPT:

Target: Maximum impact with reasonable faculty effort

- Finding optimal projects and partners
- Facilitated co-operation for both academics and customers
- Understanding the role of academia in the society

Shaping a sustainable future.



aalto.fi