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MORNING AFTER PILLS

# Disruptive Innovations, Weak Signals, and Unusual Fundraising Strategies

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## Abstract

The war also threatens the world's post-pandemic economic recovery: inflation, food security, energy security, and other supply chain pressures are among the many challenges facing policymakers around the world; and it has triggered one of the largest refugee crises in Europe since World War II. In less than a month of conflict, more than twice as many refugees have arrived in many parts of Europe than in the 2015 refugee crisis. It would be a decent and civilized gesture to offer free university education as well as living stipends to a few thousand refugees and displaced persons. But what kind of free, high-quality education can we offer to citizens of other countries, migrants and refugees, if we often do not offer it to all domestic clients? Without new models of sustainability and external assistance, we will always be encouraging exodus or relocation to another country that has a different economic reality, with all the potential side effects: discrimination, underemployment, slave labor, child abuse, sexual exploitation, brain drain, and other concerns. As a result, we will be restricting access for future generations.

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## **Disruptive Innovations, Weak Signals, and Unusual Fundraising Strategies**

Roth, R. L.

In the face of an increasingly dystopian and uncertain present, of highly disruptive changes with serious implications for our lives, it seems essential to listen to the signs that may indicate where we are headed. The war also threatens the world's post-pandemic economic recovery: inflation, food security, energy security, and other supply chain pressures are among the many challenges facing policymakers around the world; and it has triggered one of the largest refugee crises in Europe since World War II.

In less than a month of conflict, more than twice as many refugees have arrived in many parts of Europe than in the 2015 refugee crisis. It seems that the world has moved on and forgotten about the outbreak, the rules of social distancing and health protection.

This situation required innovative responses to the challenges and forced a rapid rethinking of the field of education, forcing a learning curve. What was once an option has become a necessity. Many services and experiences are being mediated by technology.

Education is a driving force in society, a human right, and an indispensable means for the realization of other human rights. This moment needs to be understood as a break with the patterns that brought us here. If we are not going back to the same place we left, there is no reason to stop dreaming about free, quality education as a right for all, including displaced people and war refugees.

It would be a decent and civilized gesture to offer free university education as well as living stipends to a few thousand refugees and displaced persons. But what kind of free, high-quality education can we offer to citizens of other countries, migrants and refugees, if we often do not offer it to all domestic clients?

Without new models of sustainability and external assistance, we will always be encouraging exodus or relocation to another country that has a different economic reality, with all the potential side effects: discrimination, underemployment, slave labor, child abuse, sexual exploitation, brain drain, and other concerns. As a result, we will be restricting access for future generations.

If we want to prepare young people, displaced persons and war refugees more quickly for the labor market and ensure employability, it is not enough to reduce the course load of university courses and add a master's degree. Barriers must be identified, removed, and avoided to ensure accessibility.

Faced with this uncertain and turbulent matrix, universities must react quickly and find solutions; become vibrant, motivating, fully connected, and mobilized; or young people may leave at an even faster rate.

To meet this new reality, tertiary education needs to evolve. It will need to develop faculty to work in diverse settings and media, with cutting-edge technologies. This is not the same as training digital immigrants to teach online. It means developing design, presentation, and intelligent pedagogy skills based on modern teaching and learning strategies at a level adequate to interact with digital natives using social media efficiently and effectively. The challenge is to try to figure out today what will be relevant tomorrow to help universities reinvent themselves seamlessly and be more competitive in this unknown future.

Facing uncertainties, virus variants, and a growing wave of refugees, it is time to seek new ideas, move forward, think outside the box, listen to weak signals, get information from other areas, seek new paradigms, technologies, methodologies, trends; innovate, adopt different ideas, experiment with unusual fundraising.

Innovation always accompanies change, so a new challenge arises for universities to reformulate themselves and thus start a new life cycle: innovate, find the right concept at the right time, and establish a market differential. An omnichannel strategy for products and services through hybrid and combined approaches; points of presence, physical and virtual/digital; a business model in the context of this new reality; a reformulation for a new dawn.

Innovation doesn't have to be something totally new or initiated by early adopters, it can be a recombination of old ideas, a new approach to something that already exists, or simply an imitation of something that exists elsewhere. A creative idea does not have to be unusual, world-changing, totally unique, original, extravagant, or even fun. Innovation needs to be socially useful, something that solves current and future social challenges.

Creating equal opportunities for citizens, partners, migrants, and refugees also means ensuring equal treatment and access for all, regardless of the country of origin and the economic resources of the families; because the reality includes completely free higher education for some, partially or fully paid for others.

The DISRUPT5<sup>1</sup> project is a major breakthrough attempt in the areas of economics of education and economics of innovation, aligned with the most current educational practices and policies, of high relevance for traditional universities, and can be the basis for the creation of a new concept for a next generation university.

It seeks to make mobility a reality; improve the quality and efficiency of education and training; promote equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship; enhance creativity and innovation at all levels of education and training.

It proposes a transformation agenda for higher education institutions, enabling all citizens, immigrants, refugees, and displaced persons to receive the best education and training. It intends to ensure that education and training institutions are safe and inclusive; and that everyone can access a high-quality education, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

Thus, it aims to facilitate student and educator mobility and international cooperation between educational institutions, avoiding structural barriers to learning development and improving access to quality education, as well as meeting the UN's 2030 Agenda.

It will seek to draw lessons related to best practices, finding solutions while adding diversity by including other countries in the multidisciplinary discussion on the role that education can play, even in difficult times, everywhere.

These signals are expected to potentially affect the economy, public accounts, and social inclusion.

For this to become a reality, the fundamental issue of financial resources needs to be addressed, broadening the sources of income for universities through concrete and multifaceted solutions.

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<sup>1</sup> Roth, R. L. (2023). Designing a Sustainable NextGen Concept for Euroversities by blended Emerging Trends, Disruptive Innovations, New Technologies, Weak Signals and Unusual Fundraising Strategies (DISRUPT5). <https://doi.org/10.17605/osf.io/cefpq> , <https://figshare.com/projects/DISRUPT5/170220>