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**Abstract**

Fully publicly funded higher education institutions (HEIs) are immune to changes. There is no imminent threat of bankruptcy or closing to provoke transformation. Universities await instructions from the federal government and position themselves primarily to compete for state funding. Public funding allocations leave few resources to invest in new initiatives. This article focusses on the lessons learned during the five years of practice, assisting the transformation of top publicly funded Russian universities, which can be applied to other contexts to help HEIs change. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)