The four-year doctoral thesis journey

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peer learning, teamwork, career development

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• EUA-CDE Annual Meeting 24 June 2022
Majakka project

• 5-year project on Water and Environmental Engineering
• 6 PhD students & a coordinating postdoc
• Goal: Well-organized and systematic processes to support practices and supervision

Aalto Excellence Recognition 2018; Aalto Pioneering Excellence award 2021
Motivating, rewarding, strengthening, empowering zone

Confusing, challenging, stressful, exhausting zone

Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4
I Planning

Students’ challenges

- How to start?
- Researcher identity
- Funding

Success zone

- Excitement!
- Rookies Club
- Weekly meetings
- The team: interdependencies & subsidiarity
- Puuhas

Supervisors’ challenges

- Time management
- Giving freedom vs. setting focus
- Competition
- Long-term commitment

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II Learning

Students’ challenges

- Diversity
- Publishing
- Non-linearity
- Invisible learning

Success zone

- A collaboration paper
- Writing sessions
- Skill clinic
- Growth
- T-shaped learning
- Milestones!
- Professional support

Supervisors’ challenges

- Learning
- Ownership/authority
- Time management

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III Independence

Students’ challenges

- Imposter syndrome
- Invisible learning

Success zone

- Research visit
- Confidence
- Collegiality
- Merits & self-management
- Advisor role

Supervisors’ challenges

- Focus
- Time management

Students’ challenges

Supervisors’ challenges

Research visit

Merits & self-management
IV Finishing

**Students’ challenges**
- Final stretch crisis
- External stressors
- Life after graduation?

**Success zone**
- Synthesis Group
- Collective success
- Postdoc starting grant
- Alumni community

**Supervisors’ challenges**
- Completion of thesis & commitments
- Goodbyes

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Making Waves: Joining forces for better doctoral education in water research

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Abstract

We argue that doctoral education in water needs an elevated focus towards educating game changers who can drive innovation and change towards more sustainable futures across academic and non-academic settings.

Strengthening interdisciplinary water research – learnings from sports team management

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