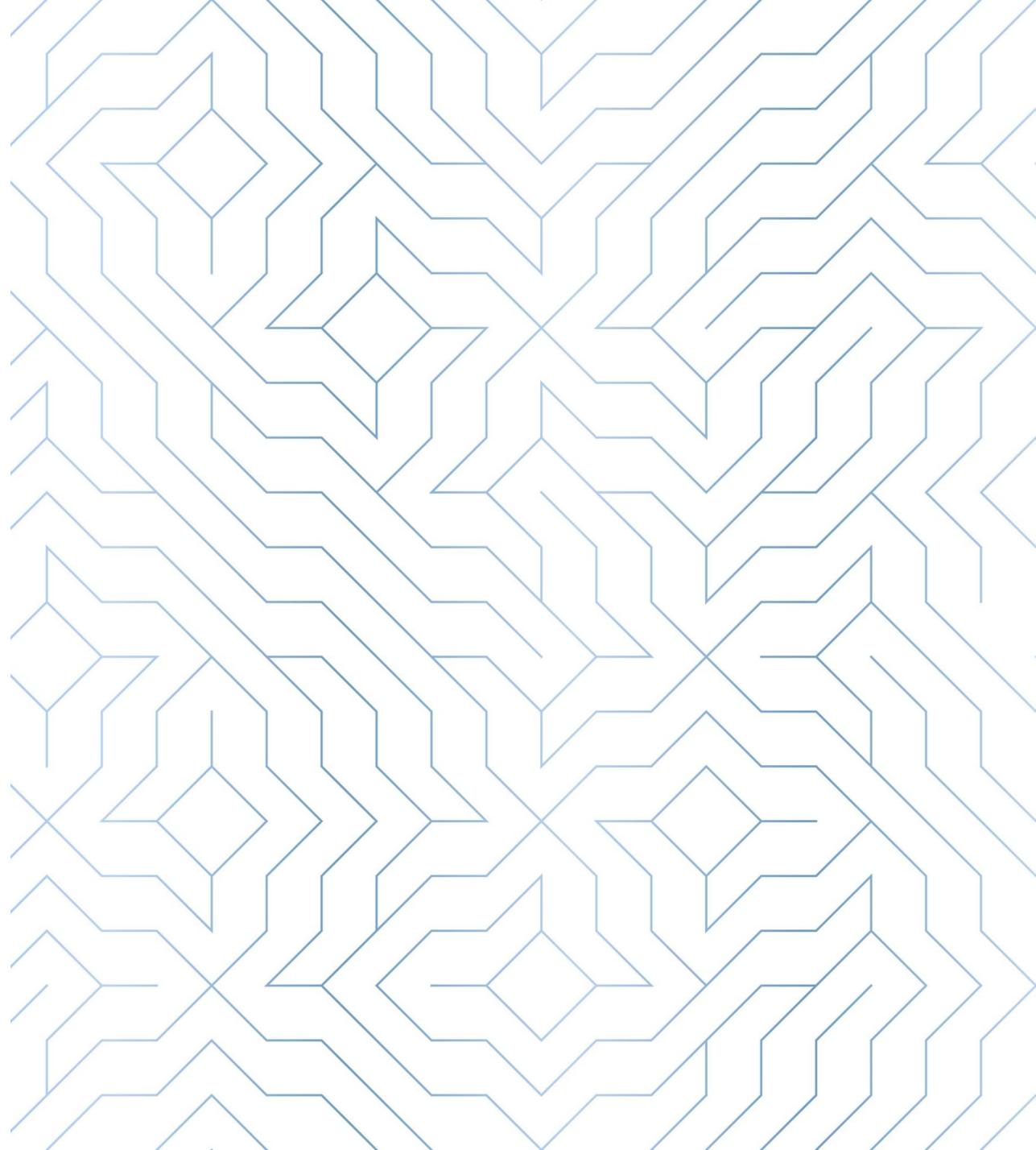




**International Opportunities through Accelerator Networks: A Study of Startups Becoming Embedded in Edtech Context**

**Anette Kairikko, Principal lecturer, PhD  
Tohtorikiihdyttämö at Turku UAS  
October 3, 2023**



# MY JOURNEY TO PHD

WHO

WHAT

HOW

KEY TAKE-AWAYS





# Brief bio

- Anette Kairikko, Principal lecturer, PhD
- 25+ years of experience from from Finland and abroad in large international companies, small businesses, and startups, lecturing at higher education, as well as research, development, and innovation activities.
- 2016-2020 PhD, University of Westminster, London
- 1991-1997 MSc (Econ.), Helsinki school of economics and business administration
- Research interests: entrepreneurial ecosystems, sustainable value creation, entrepreneurship education, co-innovation and corporate entrepreneurship, internationalization of SMEs and qualitative methods
- “I am passionate about global collaboration and continuous learning.”

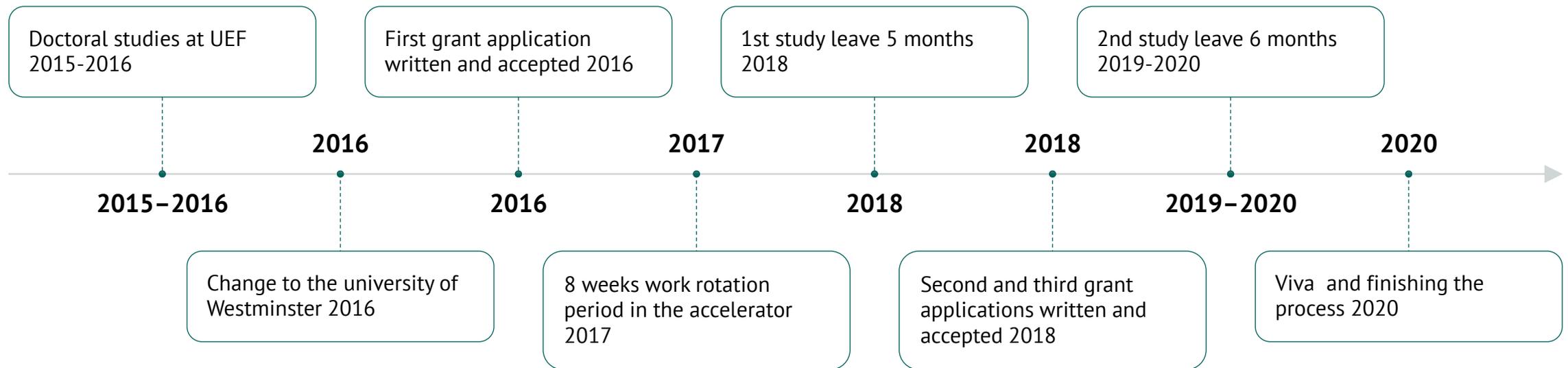
# My PhD research in the nutshell

- the dissertation examined **edtech startups** in the **Finnish context**: focus on **the role of accelerator networks** as embedding mechanisms for **internationalising startups**
- positioned at the intersection of **entrepreneurship, international entrepreneurship, and innovation**
- **conceptually**, the study draws on the concepts of **network embeddedness** and on **international opportunities** defined as non-linear, iterative, and interactive development
- conducted as a **single case study** within the emerging edtech sector in the Finnish context and it adopts **abductive approach**
- **data** consists of 46 **interviews, observations, and documents**
- the analysis is based on **the method of constant comparison**
- **key findings**: 1) **identifies accelerator networks**, which are **relevant for international opportunity development**, 2) demonstrates the **mechanisms of international opportunity development through networks, resources, and collaboration**, 3) a **typology** is applied to **classify internationalising startups** in terms of accelerator networks, international opportunities, and product development
- **key contributions**: 1) to the **emerging academic literature on accelerators** by **explaining the role of accelerator networks** during the parallel process of venture creation and international opportunity development 2) **propositions developed to advance future accelerator studies** 3) joins the **discussion on contextual dimensions** in entrepreneurship studies

# Publications based on the PhD research

- Kairikko, A., & Dhaliwal, S. (2021) Accelerator networks as embedding mechanisms for internationalizing start-ups: a study in the Finnish edtech context in Laveren et al. (eds) Contextual heterogeneity in entrepreneurship research – Frontiers in European Entrepreneurship Research. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Kairikko, A., Dhaliwal, S., & Cacciolatti, L. (2023). Entrepreneurial micro-ecosystems: a study on connectedness and collaboration in the edtech community in Xheneti et al. (eds) Contextual Embeddedness of Entrepreneurship: Frontiers in European Entrepreneurship Research. Edward Elgar Publishing.

# My PhD Journey



# Research site: xEdu edtech accelerator

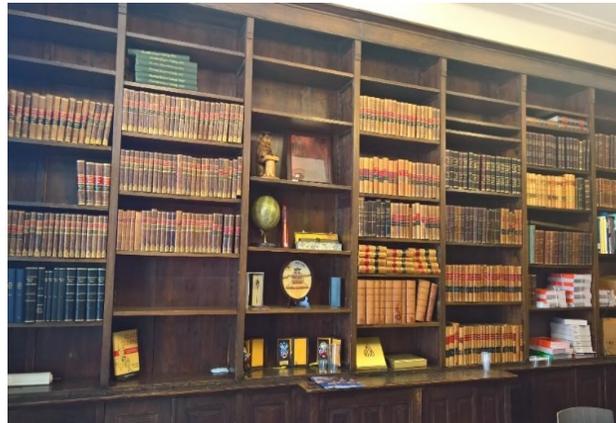


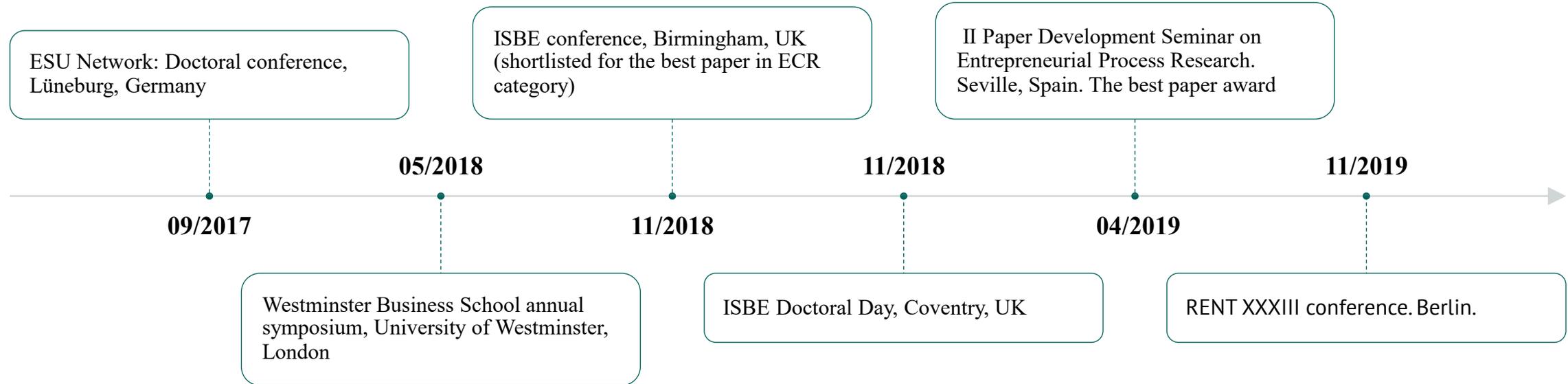
Table 10 Summary of the Interviews and Observation Data

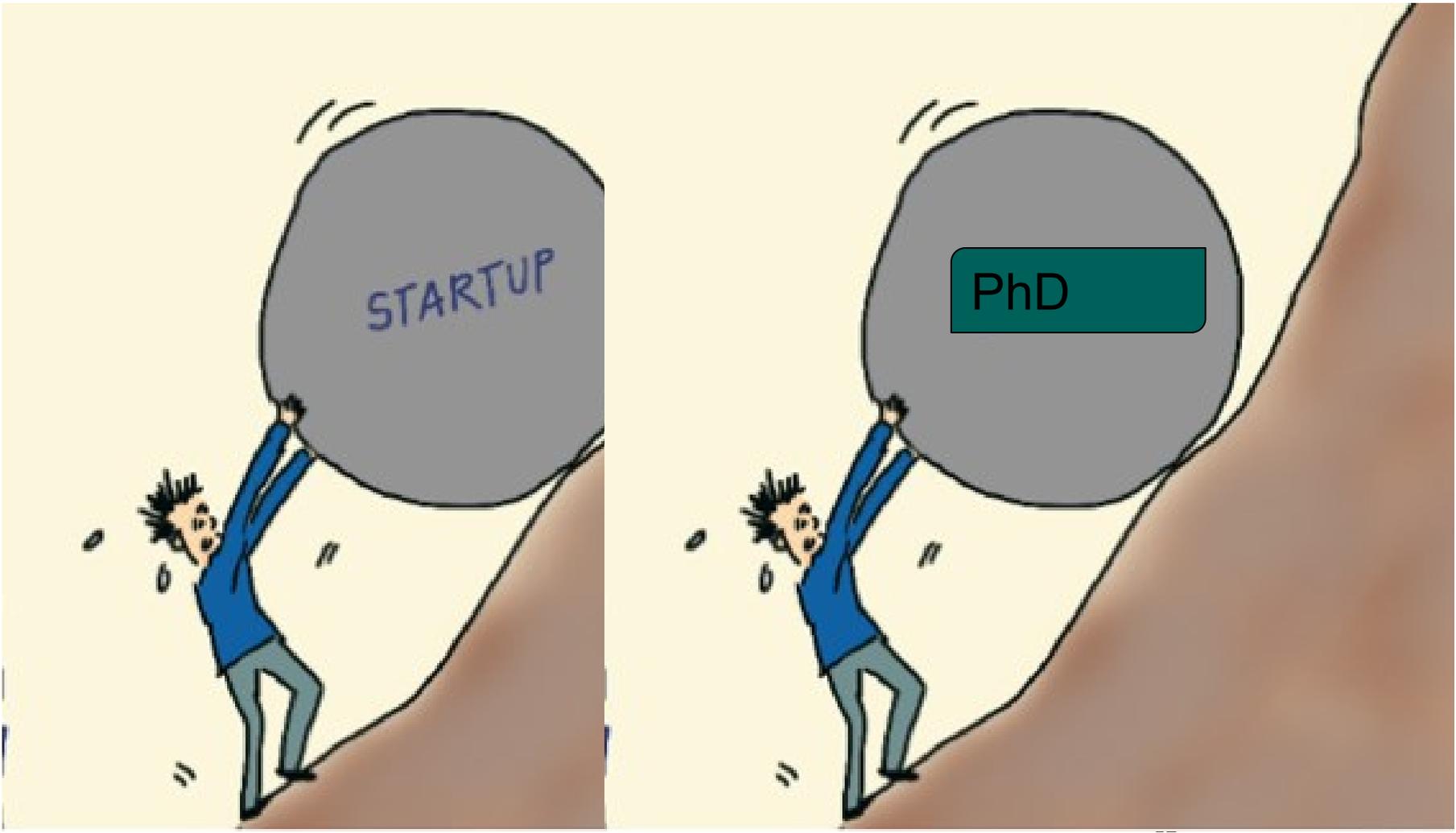
	Observations	Interviews
Purpose	Stay close to real-life situations, naturally occurring data, feeding the interview discussions, holistic understanding of the research setting	All key groups relevant to the research and discovered during the observation period
Number and types of observation points/interviews during the <a href="#">time period</a>	51 observation points **** February 2017–December 2018 an observation point in this context is an event lasting min. 1 hour and max. 1 day	46 interviews consisting of accelerator management (5) *, network partners (10) **, and startup entrepreneurs (31) *** April 2017–April 2018
Duration	One hour to one day	Average 51 minutes varying from 23 minutes to 85 minutes
Venue	Accelerator (46) exhibition centre (2) city hall (1) event forum in a shopping mall (1) old student house (1)	Accelerator premises (22), Skype (12), interviewee’s office (7), public spaces (hotel lobby, café, restaurant) (4), interviewee’s home (1)
Language	English and Finnish	Finnish (36) and English (10)
Documentation	Notes and reflective diary describing, analysing, reflecting	Recorded and transcribed verbatim

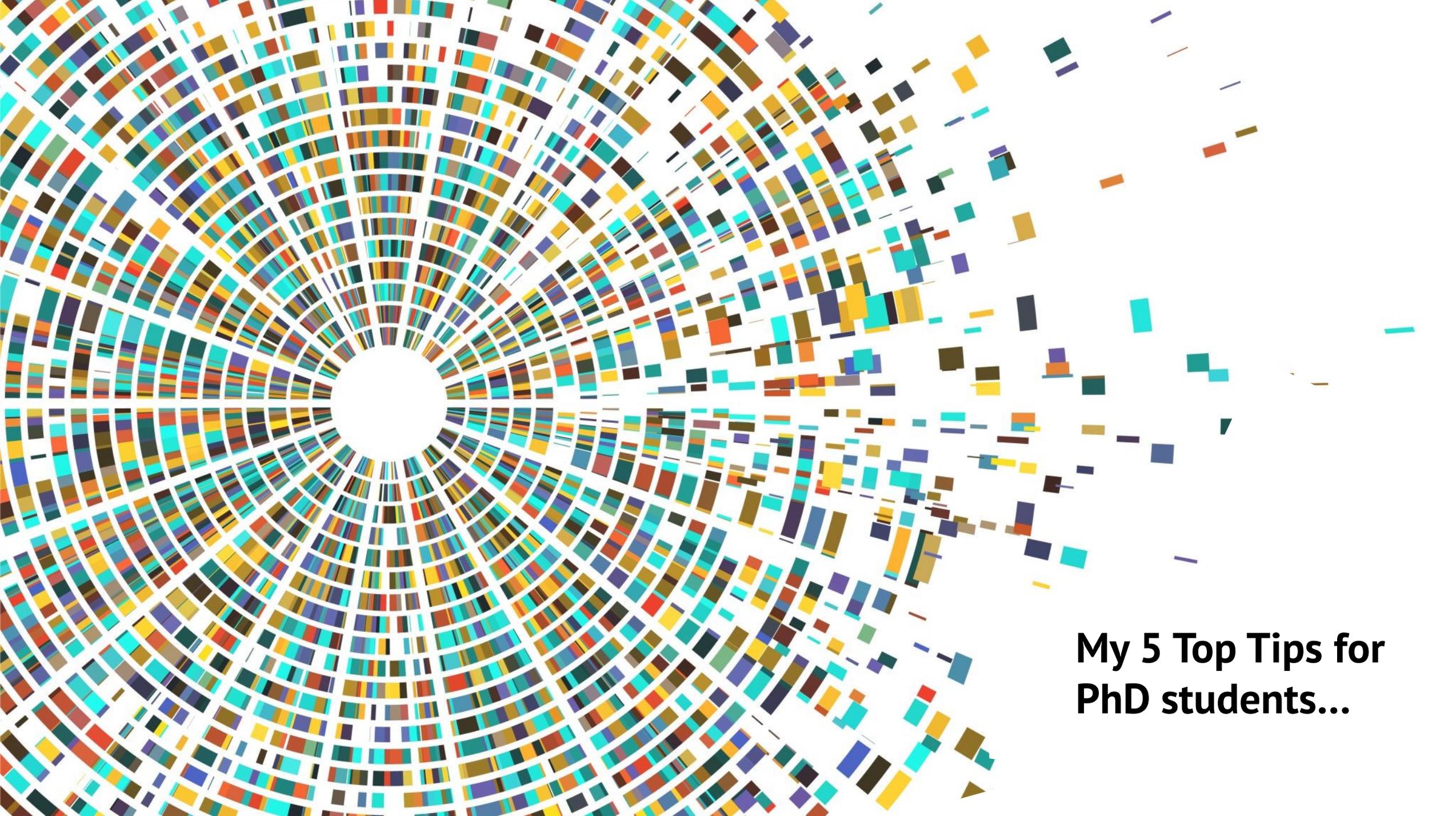
	2016				2017				2018				2019				2020				2021			
Activities in the PhD process	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Application to the University of Westminster/Writing proposal	task completed																							
Literature review	task completed												task planned											
Pilot interviews*																								
ESU Network PhD conference, 9/17																								
APR1 May 1, 2018																								
Data Collection**																								
ISBE Conference, 11/18																								
APR2, May 1, 2019																								
Data Analysis																								
Sevilla paper development																								
Submitting a journal article																								
RENT conference																								
APR 3, May 1, 2020																								
Writing up***																								
Revising and Finalizing																								
Viva and graduation																								
* Apr-May 2017 full-time research activities																								
** Jan -May 2018 full-time research activities																								
*** Aug 2019-Jan 2020 full-time for writing up																								



# Attended conferences







**My 5 Top Tips for  
PhD students...**



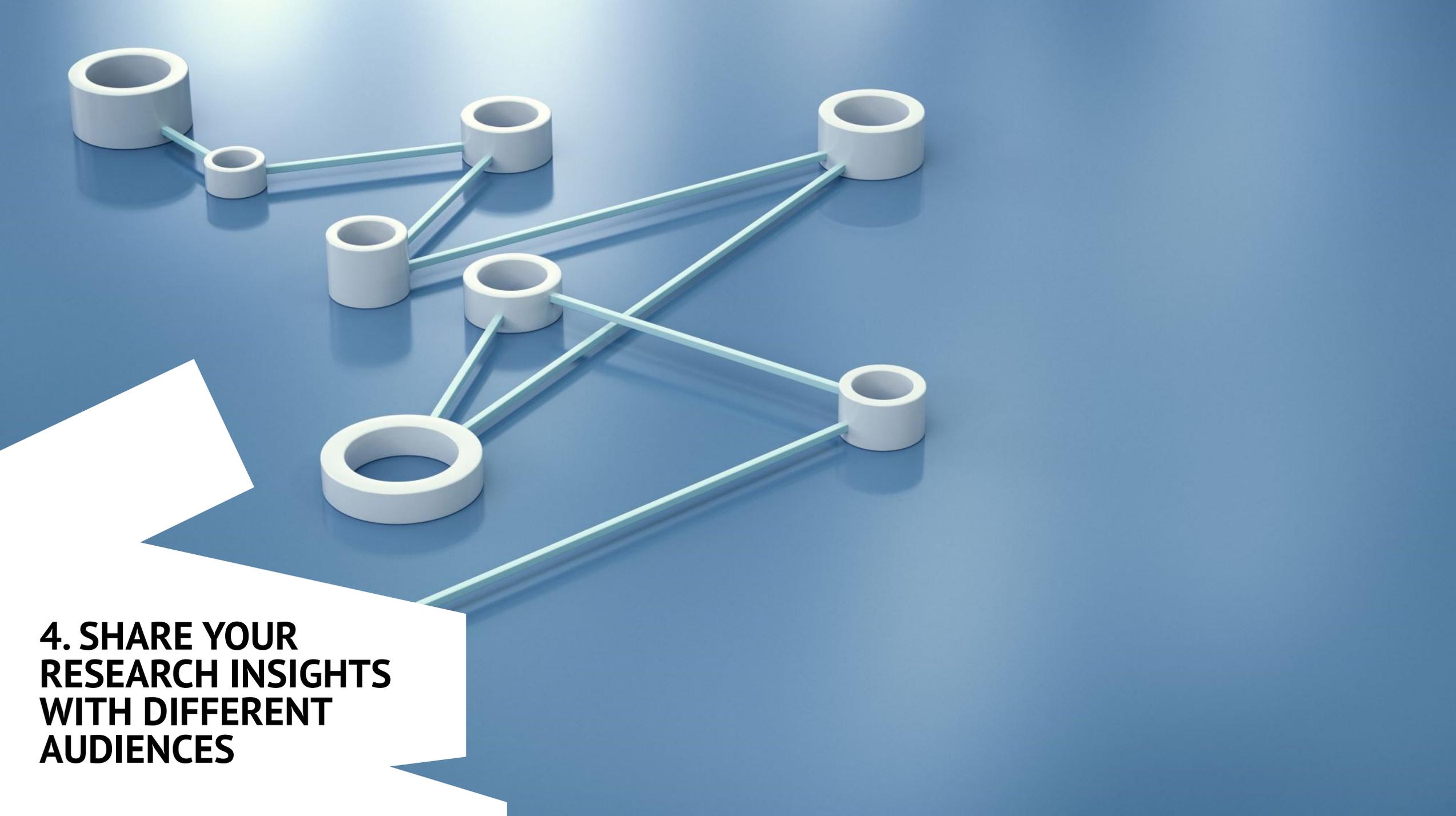
**1. PLAN, PLAN AND  
PLAN SOME MORE**



**2. BE FLEXIBLE**



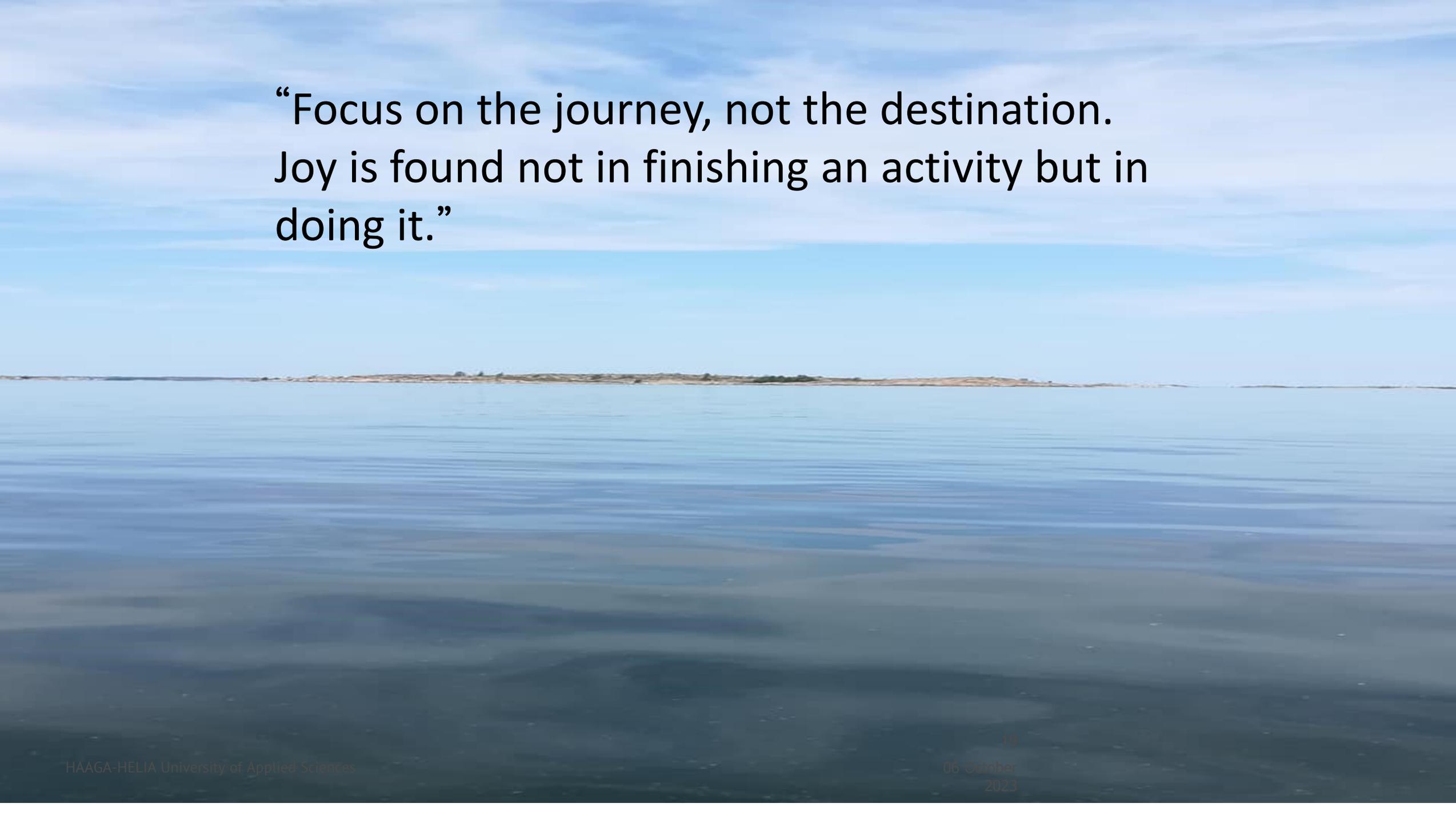
**3. REMEMBER THE  
POWER OF PEER  
SUPPORT**



**4. SHARE YOUR  
RESEARCH INSIGHTS  
WITH DIFFERENT  
AUDIENCES**



**5. CONSIDER YOUR  
RESOURCES**



“Focus on the journey, not the destination.  
Joy is found not in finishing an activity but in  
doing it.”



[Anette Kairikko | LinkedIn](#)

Thank you for your  
attention!

