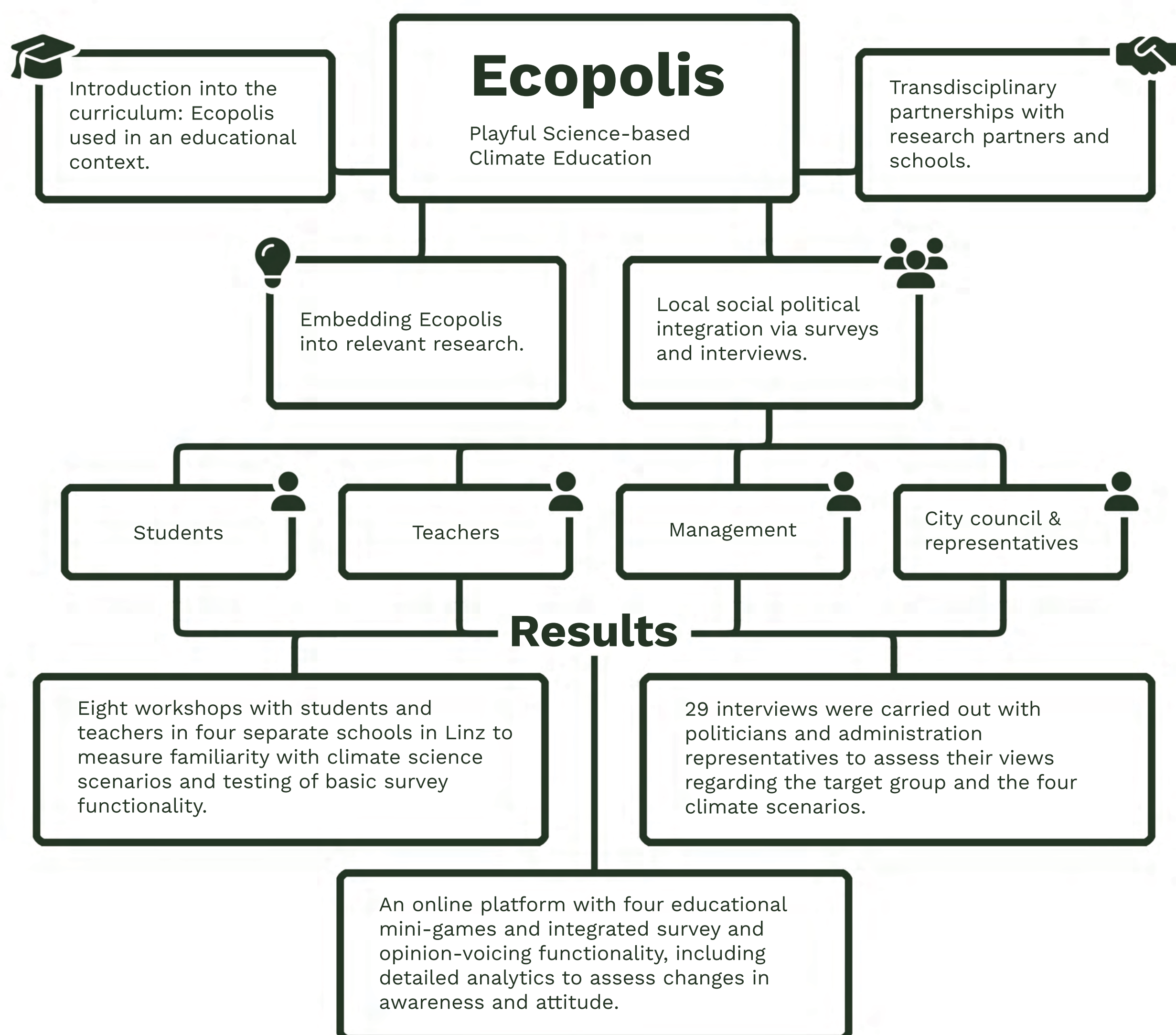




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ECOPOLIS

Playfully exploring climate education and policy in the urban setting of Linz, Upper Austria.



ECOPOLIS PLAYGROUND

Establishing Climate-related Opinion-voicing and Political Participation via Online Learning and Interactive Scenarios

Manage Games | Play

Cool it!

Keep it cool, but not too cool. This is the core essence of Cool it. Move the greenhouse gases in our atmosphere around so that heat dissipates properly, but without leading to the next ice age!

Save it!

Extreme weather can create a catastrophe and leave quite a mess at that. Try to find all of the objects that have been scattered by recent weather events and dispose of them properly.

Move it!

Should you take the sports car or the bus instead? Different vehicles, tempos and driving behaviours have various impacts on emissions. And whatever emissions you create in this game, you have to clean up yourself. So watch your driving habits!

Shop it!

What impacts do the products we buy and consume have on the environment? Try to complete your shopping list without causing too much waste. Balance is key in this game; you have to compete against your opponent but still stay under the defined environmental threshold.

Motivation

Although the climate crisis has definitely become a more prominent issue on the public stage, social and political action are still lagging behind. Despite increases in general knowledge and awareness, necessary actions are still severely lacking. While education is intended to foster behavioral change, a "knowledge-action gap," often exists in which understanding does not necessarily translate into action. Scientific information alone is insufficient for societal change. Bridging this gap through comprehensive climate education is therefore crucial to promote active participation in climate protection. Thus, early integration of climate and political education into school curriculum is essential for societal transformation. However, this process is not simply one-way; future voters also need a platform to voice their own ideas and concerns so they also feel they are being heard.

Goals

The ECOPOLIS project aims to explore how communication between political representatives and the audience of 14-16-year-olds can be facilitated by an online platform. The platform features interactive content including games and opinion voicing activities that can be readily used in a classroom setting, promoting a better understanding of the scientific issues behind climate change, but also provide information about current and future climate policy in the local political community of Linz. Additionally, general information about the target audience such as their knowledge about political processes, climate-related science and general attitudes can be collected via integrated quizzes and questionnaires. Thus, ECOPOLIS represents a potential tool for political representatives for both information and inquiry purposes. In addition, the platform should serve as a model for a communication tool between local politicians and young, soon-to-be-eligible voters and facilitate more direct discourse.

Moderator

Teachers and political representatives can take on the role of a moderator to both share and gather information, using customisable modules such as surveys, quizzes, brainstorming activities, and mini-games. All data is collected anonymously and can be shared with groups in real-time.

There are currently four different games to choose from, each with a specific theme. Moderators can build their own game levels or share levels that the participants created themselves. While the participants play, data about each game session is collected.

Once games have been played, discussions can begin! Surveys and quizzes can be used to evaluate the level of knowledge transfer and participants can submit their own questions and ideas related to climate policies via a brainstorming module.

Moderators can view and organise submitted ideas and questions with the entire group or selectively show them content on a public screen. This also includes the results from quizzes and surveys.

A collection of climate policies have been defined as measures and are the main focal points for discussions with the class. These measures are both a basis for pre-voicing and class-based voting activities.

Participant

Participants can view information and complete quizzes and surveys defined by the moderator on any Internet-capable device, including their own smartphones. All participant activity is anonymous but also linked to all other activities.

Once the moderator has made a mini-game available, the participants can play a series of rounds and even build their own levels. In the case of Shop it, they can play against each other. While playing through different scenarios, they can think about ideas and proposals for the next steps.

A variety of brainstorming modules can be utilised to submit questions and ideas, including a simple gamified idea box, a chat application and a mapping module. Submit questions and your ideas for a better future.

Participants can also submit their own ideas for climate measures, although these would typically be discussed in class before being added to a voting activity by the moderator.

Voting activities allow participants to anonymously choose measures they feel are the most beneficial, and they can use the points collected from playing the mini-games to collectively support measures the class would like the city of Linz to implement.

Moderator | **Participant**

Statements from school workshops

- "If you already know that there are not enough green spaces in the city, why does it take so long to change that?"
- "Why aren't there stricter rules to keep people from destroying our environment?"
- "Why don't the trash cans in Linz allow you to separate your trash like in most schools?"
- "Why are we building another motorway when we know we should try to reduce traffic?"
- "How much money is spent annually on climate measures in Linz?"
- "How much energy does Linz actually use? And how much energy is generated by solar panels in Linz?"

Process

