

FINAL REPORT CLIMATE INSIGHTS: POLICIES AND POLITICS



CLIMATOPIA



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MOTIVATION – PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, the geopolitical turmoil caused by the ongoing war in Ukraine along with the climate crisis that is becoming increasingly evident in the form of seasonal weather disruptions affecting our daily lives, undoubtedly raise the risk of a global polycrisis. Former European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker, to whom we owe the currency of the term polycrisis, borrowed it in 2016 from the French theorist of complexity Edgar Morin, who first used it in the 1990s. As Morin himself explained, it was with the ecological alert of the early 1970s that a new sense of overarching global risk entered public consciousness (Tooze, 2022).

Nowadays, climate change is being emphatically reframed as climate emergency. This year's annual edition of the World Economic Forum Global Risks Report (2023) features six out of ten global risks ranked by severity over the long term (10 years period) directly related to the global environmental crisis: failure to mitigate climate change, failure of climate-change adaptation, natural disasters and extreme weather events, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, natural resource crises, large-scale environmental damage incidents.

Reinforcing this gloomy outlook, the International Institute of Sustainable Development notes in the 2022 Earth Negotiations Bulletin that never in the history of humanity has the world faced so many environmental threats: we are losing biodiversity at an alarming rate, our oceans are being choked with plastic, while toxic chemicals are vastly produced. At the same time, for millions of people, access to fresh water and sanitation is a growing challenge. Evidently, the basic human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights are at great risk. As Article 3 of the Declaration states: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." Sadly, along with the catastrophic effects of our human action (or inaction) against nature itself, too many lives are being lost because of our profligate abuse of the natural environment.

But even beyond the tragic loss of life and violation of basic human rights due to environmental change, the toll is also rising with regard to humanity's mental health. As stated in the UN Chronicle on the occasion of the World Mental Health Day on October 10 2022, "Never has it been so urgent for the world to prioritize mental health. The triple impact of COVID-19, climate change concerns and ongoing wars and conflicts is creating an enormous toll on our population—be they directly or indirectly impacted" (Kestel, 2022). Our sense of "ontological security" as

famously coined by Anthony Giddens (1991) is severely disrupted. We feel as nothing can no longer be taken for granted. In this evolving existential crisis, eco-anxiety seems to become the most prevalent form of collective despair across generations for the future of humanity. And it has entered the news sphere especially since autumn 2018, with the young climate activist Greta Thunberg as a focal point. Speaking openly of her climate change anxiety, she actively demonstrated in the most emphatic way how the climate crisis is influencing the younger generations outlook for the future.

As news coverage is constantly filled with apocalyptic stories of storms and wildfires, young people, absorbing the gravity of these warnings, have become the defining face of the climate movement — marching, protesting and berating their elders for bequeathing them an uncertain, unstable future. Besides those voicing out their anger and anxiety, many other vulnerable groups, especially younger children are unable to express their significant affective responses, such as psychological distress, anger, or despair and experience major “negative” emotions, like worry, guilt, and hopelessness in anticipation of climate change (Léger-Goodes, 2022). Emerging literature focuses mainly on adults’ experience and relative little is known about the ways in which children and youth experience eco-anxiety (Pikhala, 2020b)

In the last few years, the expanding literature on this critical topic describes how children and youth are coping with eco-anxiety, including maladaptive (e.g., denial) and adaptive responses, such as constructive hope, used as a positive coping mechanism (Pikhala, 2020a). Alongside eco-anxiety, ‘ecophobia’ has also emerged in the wider lexicon (representing feelings of powerlessness to stop imminent environmental catastrophe); among ‘eco-anger’, ‘eco-despair’, and ‘solastalgia’, an emerging form of depression or distress caused by environmental change, such as from climate change, natural disasters, and/or extreme weather conditions. (Force of Nature Report, 2021). Preliminary considerations for parents, teachers and educators, mental health care providers, school systems, adults and people of power include adding age-appropriate climate education to the school curriculum, considering youth’s emotions, and promoting healthy coping mechanisms through empowerment. Fostering constructive hope, a positive mindset and optimism in children, while equipping them with the relevant knowledge and the emotional skills needed, can help them face and even harness the challenge of climate change (Pikhala, 2020b).

What research also suggests is that eco-anxiety is actually a moral emotion: it is based on an accurate appraisal of the severity of the ecological crisis. Any paralyzing kind of eco-anxiety is not a desired state of mind, but there are luckily many instances of non-pathological

“practical eco-anxiety”: in these cases or proactive responsiveness, anxiety leads people to re-evaluate the situation, search for better information, and to make changes in individual and collective behavior. Thus, especially at a time when ecological matters enter more strongly in healthcare, an overly narrow view of eco-anxiety as only a health concern should definitely be avoided (Pikhala, 2020a).

Reinforcing this approach of turning the rising eco-anxiety particularly in youth into a lever for systemic transformation, the 2021 Force of Nature Report highlights that “this inflection point, this point of emotional vulnerability, allows a transformation to more sustainable lifestyles. However, this will not happen by itself: especially for young people in the throes of psychological development, it needs to be cultivated by cognitive and emotional abilities to articulate feelings - essentially, transform stories of grief and despair into a personal narrative”.

It is thus more than evident that climate education should be integrated into educational curricula, validate young people’s ecological emotions and experiences and help them cultivate mindsets of agency, purpose and resilience; guide young people to shift out of anger, anxiety, frustration and despair toward feelings of determination, community and vision. By increasing their awareness and offering solid scientific knowledge in age-appropriate learning format, climate education should motivate and empower younger generations to act and solve, imagine a brighter future and design the pathway towards its realization.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provided a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which serve as an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. (**<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>) Education for sustainable development is a central component of the fourth UN sustainable development goal on education (SDG4), while Goal number 13 on climate action targets the improvement of education on climate change. Indeed, education is about teaching young generations to understand and reflect on the physical and social world surrounding us so that they become citizens able to think critically, participate in decision making and take action. Climate change education is therefore also citizenship education.

Building on the SDGs premise, UNESCO promotes climate change education (ECC) as part of its Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), stressing that "education is critical in

helping populations understand and address the impacts of climate change, and in encouraging the changes in attitudes and behaviour needed to help them address, causes of climate change, adopt more sustainable lifestyles and develop skills that support different modules of economies, as well as to adapt to the impact of climate change". Moreover, since 2020, UNESCO explores the relevance of the new global ESD framework for 2030 during and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic in 'building back better'. Around the big questions such as 'what world do we want to live in beyond Covid-19?', 'what is necessary to rebuild and recover in a more sustainable and equitable way and not fall back into unsustainable habits and structures?' and 'what role does education and particularly ESD play and how does it contribute to the transformation needed?'. Education on climate change is grounded in science – but it is also about behaviour and action. It is about the environment and the economy, but also about equality, community values and social organisation. It promotes future citizenship that is environmentally and socially responsible on a global scale (Eurydice, 2019)

Reciprocally, while Europe has been warming faster than any other continent in recent decades, with temperatures increasing at twice the global average rate (European State of the Climate Summary 2022), key European Union policies, including the Green Deal, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the EU Skills Agenda 3 and the Council Resolution on the European Education Area 4 all point to the role of education and training in empowering and engaging people for environmental sustainability and boosting the skills and competences needed for a green transition. This new holistic growth strategy of the EU recognises the key role of schools, training institutions and universities to engage with pupils, parents, and the wider community on the changes needed for a successful transition of the EU in becoming climate neutral by 2050.

As stressed in the recent Recommendation on Learning for Environmental Sustainability adopted by the Council of the EU in January 2022, education and training for environmental sustainability is about the learning and teaching we need for personal, societal and environmental well-being today and in the future. It can be understood as an umbrella under which all subjects and disciplines have a contribution to make. Learners need to understand the inter-connectedness of economic, social and natural systems and move from awareness to individual and collective action and empowerment. Achieving this requires hands-on, engaging and action-based ways of learning, which foster knowledge, understanding and critical thinking (cognitive learning); practical skills development (applied learning); and empathy, solidarity and caring for nature (socio-emotional learning). Most importantly, it must be understood (and implemented accordingly) that sustainability must not be added in the curricula and taught as a subject per se - it should encompass all activities and subjects: "everything should be read with sustainability eyes").

Therefore, the Recommendation highlights that urgent efforts are needed to redirect education and training as a whole towards the deep and transformative changes needed for the green transition and prepare learners for a rapidly changing society, economy and future. Putting sustainability at the heart of education and training is a tremendous opportunity to deliver future-oriented, relevant, engaging and inclusive education and training, which is closely linked to and supports other education agendas of inclusion, quality, innovation, internationalisation and student-centred learning.

In symphony with this holistic approach of sustainability and by aligning its vision and action plan for the future with the imperative of safeguarding a viable and sustainable planet for future generations, the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres urged on 15 February 2023 all UN Member States to support “turbocharged” efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and make the SDGs “real in the lives of people everywhere.” Briefing the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on the report, ‘Our Common Agenda,’ UN Secretary-General António Guterres said we must start “moving the recommendations in our Agenda from ideas to action – from abstract to concrete.”

As a response to the political Declaration adopted on 21 September 2020 on the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, which reiterates that “No other global organization gives hope to so many people for a better world and can deliver the future we want”. In the declaration, members states commit to: leave no one behind; protect our planet; promote peace and prevent conflicts; abide by international law and ensure justice; place women and girls at the center; build trust; improve digital cooperation; upgrade the UN; ensure sustainable financing; boost partnerships; listen to and work with youth, and be prepared. “Our Common Agenda” responds to these twelve commitments in the political declaration in ways that also accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, as illustrated in its eloquent graphic representation presented in Annex 1.

Under the guidance of the UNSG, eleven policy briefs are currently being produced on thematic areas such as: the New Agenda for Peace, spelling out a vision for peace and security “for a world in transition and a new era of geopolitical competition”; the reform of the global financial architecture based on metrics that go beyond GDP; the needs of future generations, including a proposal to appoint an envoy serving as their global voice, as well as aiming for more systematic participation by young people in decision-making processes at the global level. Most importantly with relation to our Climatopia initiative and in synergy with the commitment to further empower the younger generations, a special policy

brief reimagining and accelerating progress on education, will focus on six areas: the purpose of education; the learning environment; the teaching profession; harnessing digital transformation; investing in education; and multilateral support for quality education for all.

The culmination of this cross-institutional effort towards the 2030 milestone will be the Summit of the Future in 2024, which the UNSG describes as “a generational opportunity to reinvigorate global action, optimize global governance and develop multilateral frameworks that work for today’s world” and for “the future we want.” As an outcome of the 2024 Summit, Guterres hopes for an intergovernmentally agreed Pact for the Future, aimed at action “towards a fair and just global financial system, a commitment to a safe, peaceful and sustainable planet, putting technology at the service of humanity and protecting future generations.”

Hope and optimism is undoubtedly essential in envisioning the future we want, but is not enough in addressing the complex uncertainties and unforeseen challenges we face. As already noted by many prominent global leaders such as former US President Barack Obama, “We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it.” (2014 Address to the United Nations Climate Summit). It is our collective duty towards young and future generations, from any stakeholder position we act in the wider education ecosystem, to embody the values reflected in the SDGs and Our Common Agenda. We need to address our own insecurities and anxieties and serve as constructive role models and mentors that can nurture and educate the citizens of tomorrow to proactively cope with the complex crises that emerge in our times, envision a better, humane future and equip themselves with the knowledge (hard skills), the mindset (soft skills) and the agency required to design it and create it.

METHODS/PROCEDURE/APPROACH

To understand how to test the materials developed for the Climatopia project and to conduct pilot study, it was first essential to establish a foundational methodology. This methodology serves as the cornerstone of the entire testing process, providing a structured and systematic approach to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the educational materials. By meticulously crafting this methodology, researchers and educators can ensure that the assessment of the Climatopia project materials is thorough, consistent, and aligned with the project's overarching goals of enhancing climate change awareness and understanding among students.

It was decided to employ the survey methodology framework, which originally comprises 16 detailed steps as outlined by (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018). However, for the specific needs of the project, this framework was streamlined to 13 essential steps, illustrated in Figure 1. Each of these steps will be described in detail to elucidate the structure of the methodology. This tailored approach ensures that the methodology is not only comprehensive but also aligned with the unique objectives and constraints of the project, facilitating an effective and efficient assessment of the Climatopia project materials.

The objective of this survey was to rigorously evaluate the Climatopia project materials, assessing their alignment with the needs and requirements of students and teachers from the four partner countries: Latvia, Spain, Greece, and Austria. This involved a comprehensive examination of the materials' relevance, usability, and educational impact, ensuring they resonate with diverse educational contexts and cultural backgrounds within these countries. The aim was to ensure that the Climatopia resources are not only informative and engaging but also adaptable and effective across varied educational settings, ultimately fostering a deeper understanding and awareness of climate change issues among the young learners and educators in these countries.

The research question was framed as follows: *What are the teachers' feedback and perceptions regarding the applicability and effectiveness of the Climatopia project materials in schools?* This inquiry aimed to delve into educators' experiences and evaluations of the resources, focusing on their practicality, integration into the curriculum, and the overall impact on enhancing students' understanding of climate change. The question sought to capture a wide range of insights, from the materials' ease of use and relevance to the educational content, to their ability to engage

students and foster a proactive approach to learning about environmental issues.

To define the target audience and sample frame for the survey, project partners reached a consensus on including students from at least two classes in each of the four participating countries. While there was no specific agreement on the age group, it was decided to focus on students in the second stage of primary education. This decision aimed to ensure a broad yet relevant demographic for assessing the Climatopia project materials, emphasizing the importance of engaging young learners at a critical stage in their educational journey to instill a deep-rooted understanding of and responsiveness to environmental issues.

In the next step, it was decided to use a pre- and post-test survey approach with two rounds of questioning to check knowledge before and after testing the Climatopia project materials. This method helps to see the difference in understanding and learning achieved through the project.

The next step involved defining the main issue or context for conducting the survey: why it was necessary and how it could help teachers explain it to students. The complexity of climate change and the limitations of traditional teaching methods make it hard to communicate its importance and how everything is connected. This step was important to make sure the survey had a clear purpose and was useful for teachers to talk about climate change in a way that students could understand.

Next, the project team thoroughly searched for information and added more content to the survey. They carefully reviewed and improved the survey by including important ideas from climate research. This made sure that the questions used in the survey were just right for the topic being studied. The goal was to make sure the survey questions matched the latest climate science and educational standards, making it easier to get accurate and useful responses from the participants.

The survey was carefully designed, taking the base from the Climatopia project materials and focusing on concepts like non-violent communication. It also included questions about climate education and sustainable development to see how much students knew about these topics. This approach made sure that the survey didn't just measure the immediate effects of the Climatopia materials on students, but also gave an idea of how well they understood broader environmental issues and were prepared to tackle them. In the following stage, the type of survey was chosen, and it was agreed to use Google Forms due to its easy

accessibility in schools and successful integration with Excel files, which facilitates detailed analysis later on.

The next step was to pilot instrument - ensure the survey functioned correctly, which the project team handled.

The following step involved data collection, which varied in duration across partner countries but lasted at least a month for testing the materials. Teachers were involved in gathering survey data.

The second-to-last step in this methodology involved analyzing the survey data and reviewing teacher feedback, as described in Section 4 of the project report. Each project partner conducted their own analysis of how the materials were used in their country.

In the final step, each project partner reported the data from the pilot study in their country. Finally, data from all four countries were compiled, and an analysis describing the findings was conducted, since numerous educational research methods are primarily descriptive, they aim to depict and explain existing phenomena. These studies examine individuals, groups, institutions, methods, and materials to depict, compare, contrast, classify, analyze, and interpret the entities and events within their respective fields of study (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2018)

The link to the report is accesible here:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1plvpDEoW9OxEJFvoV2H8kdPy6TEs1-g7/edit>

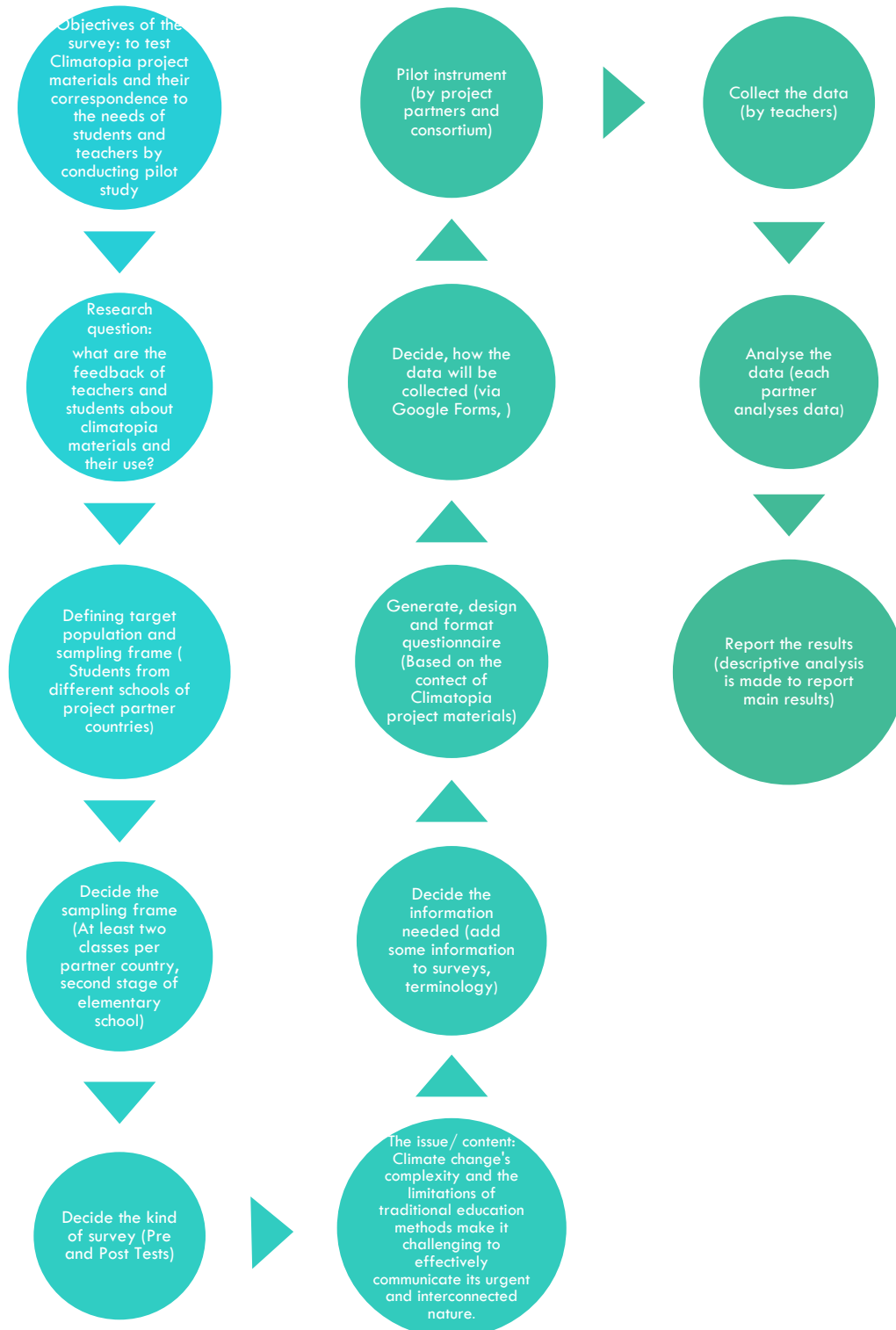
Ethical Considerations

To ensure the ethical aspects of the pilot study, each student was assigned a unique code number to prevent the identification of their personal data. The data were analyzed in a descriptive manner only, and teachers did not provide any information about the participating students to the consortium, except for the number of students and the class in which they were enrolled.

Scheme 1.

Stages in planning Climatopia project survey

Adapted from (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2018).



RESULTS/FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the Climatopia project's pilot study report's inductive analysis, the key findings of the pilot study have been summarized. These findings include case studies from each partner country, as well as recommendations developed at four levels: teacher level (individual level), school level (organizational level), and education policy level (national level). This division is adapted from UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education Roadmap (UNESCO, 2020).

At the individual level, ourselves and our sense of belonging, our roles in relation to others are contemplated. At the organizational level, the school is regarded as a structure and the people within it, their roles within the school are considered. Conversely, at the national level, the community and our role within the country and the broader world are contemplated (UNESCO, 2020).

Taking into account the above-mentioned, policy recommendations are structured around three key levels: teacher, school, and policy/decision-maker.

At the teacher level, strategies include integrating climate education into various subjects, promoting non-formal and creative activities, and emphasizing sustainable development practices in teaching. Continuous professional development programs are suggested to enhance teachers' skills in climate education and creative teaching methods.

At the school level, the recommendations focus on engaging the entire educational ecosystem. This includes encouraging schools to participate in the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, empowering teachers as climate education changemakers, and fostering cross-curricular integration of sustainability. Initiatives to engage parents and the local community in sustainable education are also highlighted.

For decision-makers and policymakers, the document advocates for professional development for educators, addressing the stigma surrounding climate change, and incorporating sustainability into educational policies. It emphasizes the importance of providing institutional support for schools and teachers implementing sustainability projects and suggests offering certification for teachers who successfully integrate sustainable practices into their teaching.

These recommendations were formulated to provide a comprehensive approach to integrating climate education and sustainable practices across various levels of the educational system, compiling insights from the implementation of the Climatopia project's Pilot Testing in Schools.

Teacher Level

Curriculum Integration

Integrate climate education content into existing science classes and beyond, using the materials to enhance lessons on environmental science, geography, and social studies to underscore the relevance of climate change across various subjects.

Non-Formal and Creative Group Activities

Organize group projects, experiments, and creative sessions that go beyond formal classroom settings. These activities could include eco-friendly art or science projects, focusing on sustainable innovations, and interactive group discussions, fostering a hands-on learning and understanding of climate change and its impact.

Integrate Sustainable Development Practices in Teaching

Encourage teachers to integrate sustainable development values into their daily teaching practices, leveraging innovative methodologies like those employed in the Climatopia project. This involves bringing real-world challenges, like climate change, into lesson plans to spark critical thinking and empathy among students.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programmes

Establish CPD programs focused on climate change education, nonviolent communication, and creative teaching methods. Teachers should be provided with ongoing opportunities for skill enhancement and exposure to pedagogical tools that promote sustainability. This can be achieved through workshops, collaborative learning, and sharing best practices.

Promote interdisciplinarity and student empowerment in sustainability education.

Educate in sustainability in an interdisciplinary way, from all areas of knowledge. Mobilise and empower students through sustainable learning activities that promote actions on climate change and the environment. Enable students to develop competences and skills related to

sustainability. Incorporate active methodologies and cooperation in Education for Sustainable Development.

Implement sustainable thinking development practices through the use of active methodologies and cooperation between teachers and students.

It is essential that learning about sustainability takes place through innovative active practices that allow students to build their learning through experiential knowledge.

Review Climatopia materials and define an appropriate implementation

Definition of an appropriate implementation plan that corresponds to the age, previous education, social and methodological skills of the pupils and the framework conditions at the school (workrooms, working hours, other resources).

School Level

UNESCO ASP Incorporation

Endorse the participation of schools in UNESCO Associated School Project (ASP) Network for provision of essential resources to schools, climate education seminars, activities etc.

Teachers as Climate Education Changemakers

Empower teachers as role models in climate education, actively engaging in and promoting sustainable practices, developing programs to recognize and support “Climate Changemakers” among students and staff, encouraging innovative projects and initiatives that contribute to environmental sustainability.

Promote Cross-Curricular Integration of Sustainability

Foster a school-wide ethos that integrates sustainable development values into the curriculum beyond specific projects. Encourage collaboration among teachers from various subjects to infuse sustainability across disciplines, promoting a holistic approach to education.

Engage Parents in Sustainable Education Initiatives

Implement initiatives that involve parents in sustainable education activities, creating a bridge between school and home. This may involve organizing informative sessions, workshops, or at-home activities that inspire parents to actively engage in the learning journey alongside their children. Strengthening this connection enhances the impact of sustainability education.

Promote citizen participation in sustainable education programmes

Encourage the participation of the local community surrounding the school in programmes and projects that promote sustainability and care for the environment. In this way, sustainable strategies will not only be limited to the school's own action, but they will also increase their range of implementation, involving more people and educating them in the field of sustainability.

Encourage the creation and development of spaces for reflection on sustainability

Create spaces in which all educational and community agents can reflect on sustainability and care for the environment. Encourage the participation of students and teachers in the process in order to develop sustainable initiatives that promote active learning through practice. Include families and members of the local community in reflection activities and sustainable practices.

Expand the schools mission statement with climate protection values

If the topic of climate protection is to be included in the school's programme, the first step is to recognise it as a value and to see to what extent it corresponds to the school's mission statement. If necessary, the school's mission statement or the list of values can be expanded accordingly.

Share Climate Education (Climatopia) materials at a teachers conferences or methodology seminars

The school organisation can support the implementation of the Climatopia Education Kit by presenting the topic of climate protection and the materials at a teachers' conference. This can also take the form of a workshop, for example, where teachers form small groups and work together on the materials and discuss ways of implementing them in the classroom.

Form Collaborative teams of teachers working on Climate Change aspects

Forming teams of teachers who work together to develop the implementation and then use it in lessons with pupils can lead to a multiplier effect, as it is easier for other teachers if there are already clear guidelines for organising the lesson. This could form the basis for including the content in the curriculum.

Involve different social actors of school community on Climate Change issues

Further climate protection activities can be planned and carried out with the involvement of pupils. For example, an activity can be included in the school services wheel in which pupils are responsible for identifying and reducing unnecessary electricity consumption in the school (for example, switching off unnecessary standby devices and batteries, as well as lights in empty rooms). Excursions to current exhibitions or into nature (for example on the subject of biodiversity) can be organised. Workshops can be organised for intensive training to become “climate ambassadors”. A climate box can be set up in which all pupils can put notes with ideas and suggestions. After a certain time, a plenary session takes place in which the slips of paper are analysed and the implementation of the best suggestions is discussed. You can also offer a prize for the best three suggestions.

Decision and Policy Maker Level

Professional Development for Educators

Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively teach climate education

Effectively address the stigma surrounding climate change and promote its serious consideration

Foster education initiatives, focusing on presenting information in appealing formats, such as engaging comic books or visually stimulating presentations, to pique interest and encourage active participation and global citizenship competence.

Incorporate Sustainability in Educational Policies

Advocate for the inclusion of sustainability education in national educational policies. Highlight the significance of incorporating real-world challenges, like climate change, as essential elements within the

curriculum. This involves aligning educational goals with sustainable development objectives at a policy level.

Support Teacher and School Initiatives

Provide institutional support and resources for schools and teachers engaged in innovative sustainability projects. This support can come in the form of funding, recognition, and collaborative platforms. Acknowledge and amplify successful initiatives like Climatopia, encouraging their expansion and replication across educational institutions.

Policies and strategies on Education for Sustainable Development

Design and implement useful policies and strategies to encourage schools and teachers to implement sustainability practices in the classroom. Encourage the creation and development of sustainability programmes by schools and teachers. Develop guidelines for environmental and sustainability-related initiatives.

Sustainable teacher training certificates.

Offer a qualification certificate to teachers who carry out sustainable education practices correctly and regularly in their classrooms. In this way, teachers who demonstrate that they are adequately trained and competent in sustainable education should be rewarded so that they can train other teachers or share their sustainable experiences with other people.

Recognise the relevance and urgency of climate protection.

Recognising it as a value within education policy lifts it out of partisan and activist status and gives it prestige. Once this has happened, the topic will also rise up the priority list of teaching topics in the curriculum.

Analyse and compile structural possibilities that support the implementation of climate protection.

Structures should be created within the school organisation that enable and promote the following: More flexible time organisation (enables interdisciplinary lessons and a variety of methods); Independent working hours for pupils (promotes motivation and self-assessment of pupils); Creation of workrooms that can be used across classes (promotes tutor system and thus social and methodological skills); Formation of teacher teams in which joint preparation of lessons is made possible (promotes motivation and cohesion among teachers); More opportunities for pupil participation (promotes independence, commitment, critical thinking, motivation and self-confidence).

CONCLUSIONS

Innovative Education Aspect:

The Climatopia project has introduced innovative methodologies that place students at the forefront of their own learning experiences (Comic Methodology, Gamification elements). By structuring activities to empower students as protagonists and decision makers in the teaching-learning process through hands-on practices, the project has significantly boosted student motivation and engagement in expanding their knowledge and skills. This approach signifies a departure from traditional teaching methods, fostering a dynamic and interactive educational environment that encourages active participation and deepens understanding.

Moreover, the pilot testing results and case studies have showcased a successful blend of theoretical frameworks with practical learning activities, demonstrating a commitment to progressive educational practices, showing that Climatopia project materials can be easily adapted into different school methodologies and curriculum.

Overall Community Impact:

Beyond the confines of the school, the Climatopia project has made substantial strides in raising awareness and fostering community engagement on issues of sustainability and environmental conservation.

The project's emphasis on developing competencies and skills for personal and professional growth among students has not only benefited individual learners but has also affected change within the community, as many of the activities are directed not only for students, but also their families, friends, classmates. Through collaborative efforts and inclusive initiatives, the project has a potential to foster a collective commitment to environmental stewardship and reflective thinking, ensuring a sustainable future.

In conclusion, the Climatopia project's innovative educational methodologies and community-centric approach have not only transformed teaching and learning practices within the school but have also catalyzed positive change within the broader community.

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ANNEX:

Research relevant background and context

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1MN9jTfsGazIV0kLrrgmM CQGB7FJrbXv>



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