

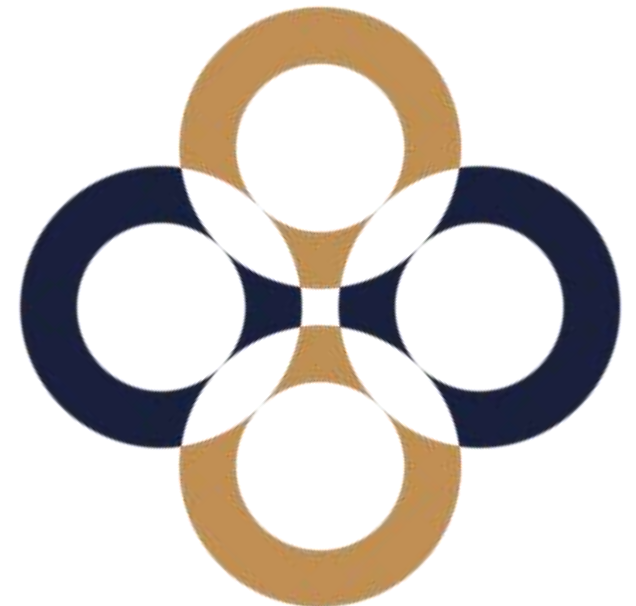
Ecoclub as a form of real-world labs?

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- Ecological economist
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Research field

- Sustainable lifestyles
- Participatory decision-making

Teaching

- Decision Techniques, Decision making skills
- Ecological economics, Degrowth
- (Environmental economics)



Urban Sustainability Research Group



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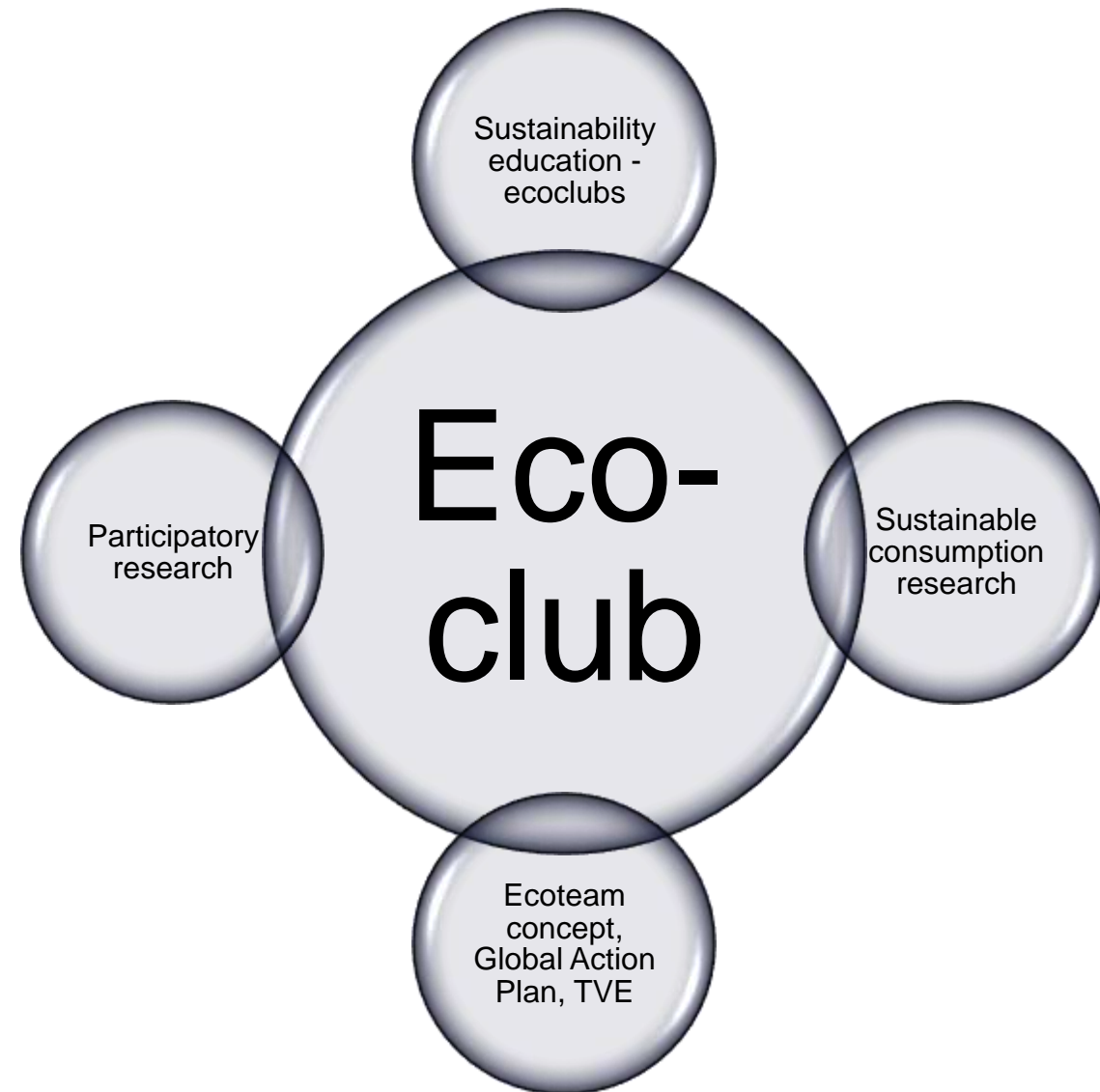
Cooperative Inquiry to foster sustainable lifestyle

Participatory research

The aim of the research is to help individuals in the transformation towards sustainable lifestyle through communities

- **Building communities within university students, based on ecoteam concept.**
 - A group of people who are interested in sustainable consumption and who meet regularly in order to change their daily habits and thus be able to follow an increasingly sustainable lifestyle (HARLAND - STAATS, 1997).
- **Conducting cooperative inquiry with and within students' groups.**
 - A non-hierarchical, democratic organization where in the process everyone becomes a researcher and implementer of sustainable consumption and will be part of the creation of common knowledge and the resulting change (GERSHON - GILMAN, 1992).

Research background



ecoclub is becoming a scientific research



Participatory research concept



The participants are also researchers



The organizers of the group start with a specific research concept



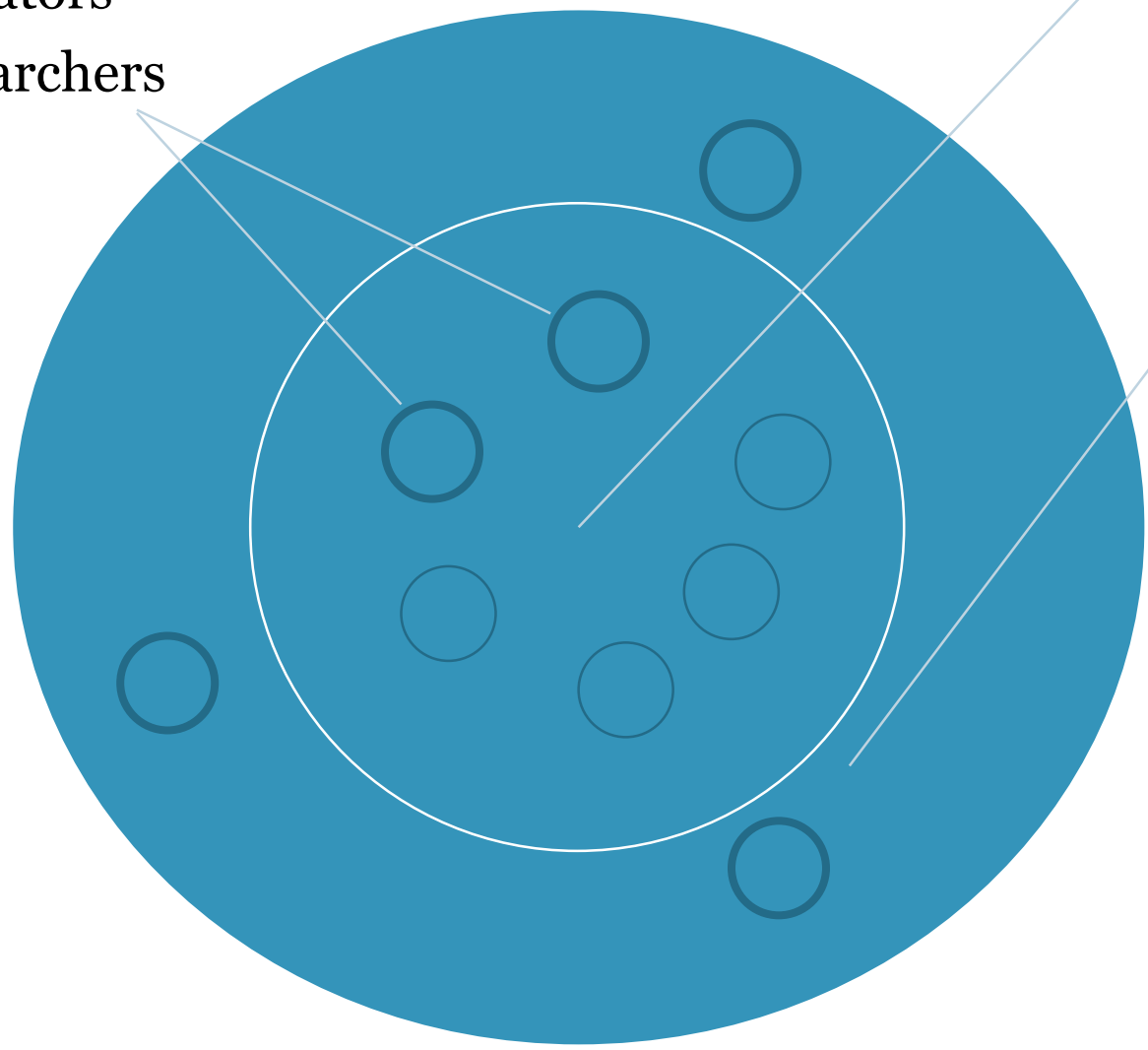
Data recording and researcher reflection



The goal is to **learn** about consumer behavior and **move** consumption habits in a sustainable direction

Participatory research concept – cooperative inquiry

Initiators
researchers



Members of the
ecoclub (initiators
and co-researchers)

Mentors

Ecoclub in practice



Meetings: 6 times,
biweekly



Elaboration of 5 topics (food, waste, cleaning or washing, fashion, beauty care).



Presentations, games, discussion on a given topic.



Challenges: individual



Measurements: written/ photo documentation

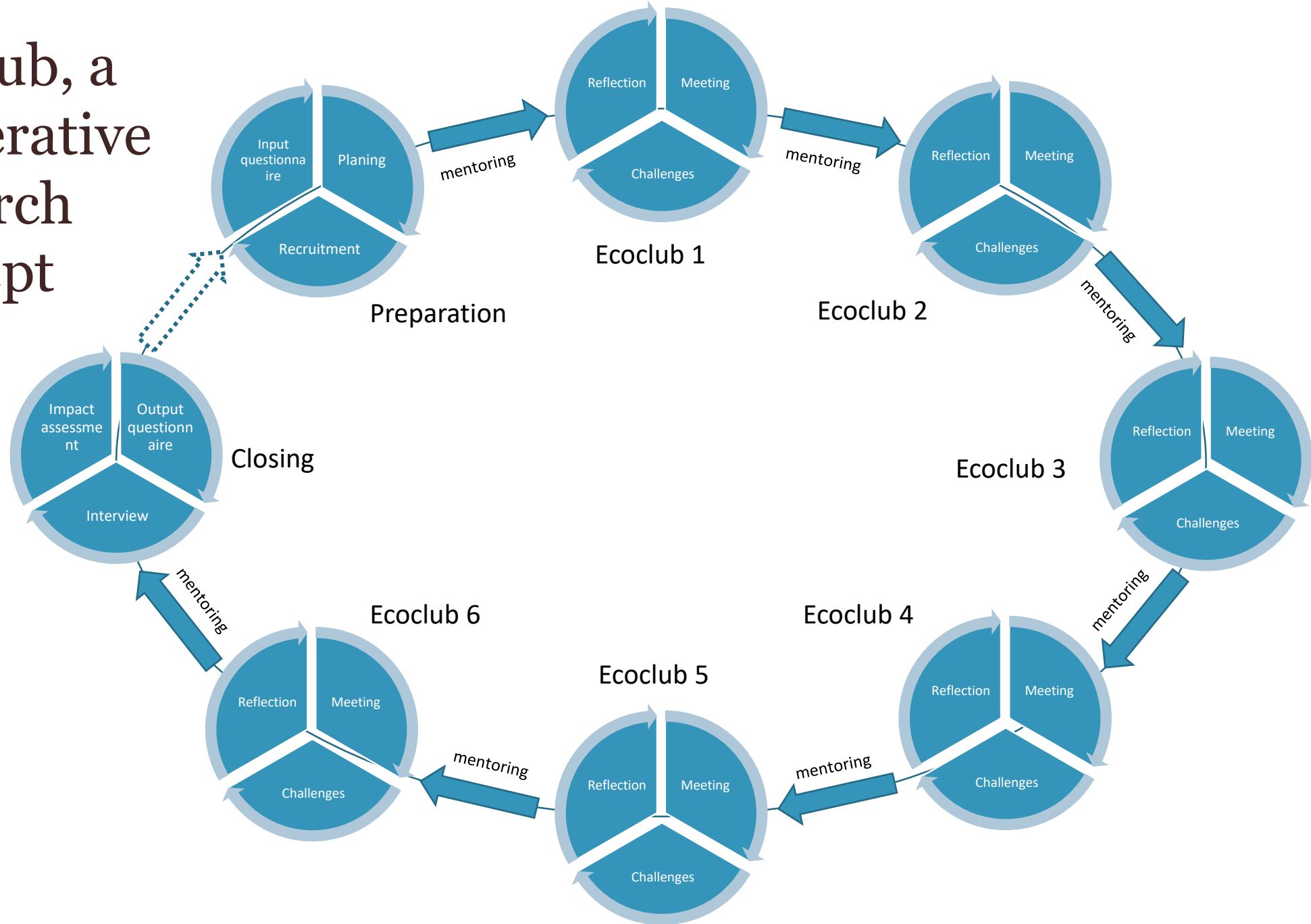


Researchers' **reflection** between ecoclub meetings



Communication: Facebook/messenger groups

Ecoclub, a cooperative research concept



Ecoclubs at Corvinus University

Ongoing research

	1. wave	2. wave	3. wave	4. wave	5. wave
Number of participants in the ecoclub	9	7	8	7	6
Timing	2021.05.20- 2021.06.22.	2022.02.01- 2022.06.30	2022.02.01- 2022.06.30	2022.09.01- 2023.01.30	2023.02.01- 2023.06.30
Format	online	in person	in person	hibrid	in person
Number of meetings	6	6	6	6	6
Frequency of meetings	1 week	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks

Most important findings



A significant shift is taking place in the ecoclub towards a sustainable lifestyle, in different areas for each member



Personal relationships and community give a positive experience to the participants



Freedom of decisions increases the motivation of the participants



Finding individual challenges and experiences of success further increase the commitment to a sustainable lifestyle

Ecoclub as a form of real-world labs?

These groups can serve as real-world labs for students according to Parodi et al, 2023 (p 288) as

- (1) they act with a clear participatory research orientation,
- (2) directly contribute to sustainability transformation,
- (3) members share a common goal of altering their daily routines to adopt more sustainable practices,
- (4) participation and transdisciplinarity are basic organisation norms,

- (5) democratisation of science is the underlying concept of the participatory research itself,
- (6) this model seem to be transferable to the local community context or in a corporate environment,
- (7) the organisation of ecoclubs started 3 years ago and is still an ongoing process
- (8) all the participants experimenting with sustainable lifestyle practices during their projects,
- (9) it creates a reflective learning environment through transformative learning for the co-researchers.

Limitations and further research

The threshold for entry is high:

- The **commitment** of the participating students to sustainability is already high
- All the participants represent higher **educational** level and social background

Further research plans:

- Use ecoclubs in **different** communities with **diverse** context (employers at a company, other schools)



**Thank you for
your attention!**

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Data collection

Questionnaires	The participants' attitudes and behaviour (before and after)
Coversations	Audio recordings or notes of conversations Reflections
Facebook/messenger group	During the challenges (2 weeks)
Weekly assessment	Challanges documented (photos, data)
Reflections on challenges	Reflections/self-reflections documented by the participants
Interviews	Semi-structured interview with the participants at the end of the ecoclub
Researchers' reflections	Researchers' reflections made after the ecoclub