

From lab to schools: transitioning research careers through science communication.

Project Objectives



In Child Health investigate indoor air quality and its influence on the health of pupils aged 6- 13 years

- We measure indoor air quality in around 50 schools with several classrooms each (e.g. NO2, VOC, particulates, fungi, bacteria)
- We conduct an epidemiological study with env. 2,500 pupils and investigate the influence of indoor air quality on pupils' health



Engagement of pupils



We involved to date > 2.000 pupils in citizen science activities

- Pupils are actively involved in the research activities
- They take part in workshops related to indoor air quality and health, collection and analysis of data, and communication of results.

Transdisciplinary Team

We are 14 partners with background in medical, technical, environmental sciences, and 1 partner with a background in social sciences.

Transition of scientists' roles and responsibilities

Scientists need to leave the laboratories and work with pupils in the schools

- Anxieties and worries

"I am afraid, will pupils understand what I try to explain?"

"Will they be interested and engaged?"

"I have never done that before, so how to best schedule activities in class?"

"Are the young ones ready to follow?"

"Will pupils' engagement bias the collected research data?"

"Are there any valuable research outcomes from their involvement?"

+ Rewards and motivators

"This was the most rewarding experience in my research work so far"

"It was so great how interested they were!"

"I had the feeling to do something really impactful."

Transition support

Short-term solutions of the project

Interdisciplinary project teams

Mutual support and learning between partners

Co-design of material and interventions with teachers

Sharing of information leaflets, presentations, lesson plans, worksheets, experimental designs in classroom, etc.

Required long-term solutions

Structural changes in research performing organisations

(e.g. citizen science support centers,

training in communication skills,

new performance metrics for research evaluation)