

Young Explorer's Club Network Charter

Coordinator of the Programme

**CENTRUM
NAUKI
KOPERNIK**

Strategic Partner of the Programme

POLSKO-AMERYKAŃSKA
FUNDACJA WOLNOŚCI



POLISH-AMERICAN
FREEDOM FOUNDATION



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Young Explorer's Club programme

The Young Explorer's Club, or the YEC (Polish: *Klub Młodego Odkrywcy KMO*, Russian: *Клуб Молодого Открывателя КМО*), is an international educational programme coordinated by the Copernicus Science Centre with support from the Polish-American Freedom Foundation.

The first club, bringing together students from Kłodzko, was founded in the late 1990s by Janusz Laska, a junior high school geography teacher. Subsequent clubs were led by teachers from the Kłodzko Educational Society.

In 2002, under the "Equal Opportunities" programme, YEC received support from the Polish-American Freedom Foundation and the Polish Children and Youth Foundation. Since 2009, the YEC community has been supporting the Copernicus Science Centre.

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Vision and mission of the YEC programme

Vision

Create a community where people become causal, learn independently and from each other.

Mission

Foster curiosity about science and promote the development and improvement of the social competence of children, young people and club mentors through self-guided exploration of the world.

Motto

Everyone Can Explore

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Operating principles

The rules for the operation of clubs and cooperation in the network of the YEC programme are regulated by:

- YEC Programme Charter;



- YEC Programme Network Charter;
- YEC Programme International Development Model.

In addition, the Copernicus Science Centre concludes:

- a renewable 2-year or indefinite-term cooperation agreement;
- with each institutional partner.

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YEC programme network

The network of the YEC programme in Poland and abroad is formed by club members and mentors, and institutions that partner with the programme. Thanks to such a network, YEC can effectively disseminate experiential and constructive learning and animate the development of local educational environments.

Members and institutions in the YEC network:

- club members;
- YEC mentors;
- regional partners (institutions);
- nationwide partners (institutions);
- YEC development partner in the East (institution);
- foreign partners (institutions).

Network members are supported by individuals, institutions and organizations in the local environment formally outside the YEC network.

V

Goals of the YEC programme network

- Increase access of children, young people and adults to the YEC programme in Poland and abroad.
- Boost competencies needed to function in the modern world for children, adolescents and adults.
- Support YEC mentors in developing the competencies needed to work with club members.
- Support the YEC community in conducting grassroots activities.



- Share knowledge and experience within the YEC network and other educational communities.

The strength of the programme lies with the freedom of action and the diversity of specialties of the people involved – YEC mentors and club members, and partner institutions. Jointly conducted activities are interdisciplinary and complementary. Co-responsibility translates into commitment and creativity in creating new forms of activity.

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YEC programme coordinator

The YEC programme activities are coordinated by the Copernicus Science Centre. The Centre acquires partners and builds and implements the programme's development strategy in Poland and abroad. It oversees the consistency of activities and implementation of the strategy by all entities in the network.

The Copernicus Science Centre provides institutional partners and YEC mentors with networking conditions:

- Creates conditions conducive to effective communication, e.g. manages www.kmo.org.pl; prepares YEC newsletter; organizes meetings of representatives and representatives of YEC community (stationary and online); develops and disseminates other forms of communication and discussion in YEC community;
- Organizes meetings of the international YEC community with the participation of YEC mentors, current and potential institutional partners from Poland and abroad, and institutions, organizations and companies interested in investing in the development of the YEC community. The meetings provide an opportunity to share knowledge and experience among current and potential programme participants (e.g. YEC Forum);
- Supports the development of the competencies of club members and YEC mentors through training and substantive support for partner institution trainers; creating and sharing educational resources and tools; engaging the YEC community in activities that foster public participation in science, including through research projects, picnics and science festivals;
- Prepares formal rules for cooperation in the programme (including agreements and contracts with partners, rules for sharing data and displaying logos);
- Provides patronage for partner events implemented as part of the YEC programme.

In parallel with the function of coordinator of the entire programme, the Copernicus Science Centre acts as regional coordinator in Mazovia, supporting YEC mentors in the region under the rules adopted for all regional partners.



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YEC programme partners

The network of nearly 1,000 clubs in several countries operates with the support of the programme's institutional partners.

Strategic partner

The Polish-American Freedom Foundation (PAFF) is YEC's strategic partner. Under an agreement concluded in 2009, the Foundation has entrusted the Copernicus Science Centre with the coordination, development and dissemination of the programme's activities. The PAFF financially supports the implementation of these tasks, thus contributing to the development of education and equalization of educational opportunities for the younger generation.

Nationwide partners

Nationwide partners are recognized and experienced institutions and organizations working for the development of education. Partners and the Copernicus Science Centre are united by common goals and values. Partners are involved in the development of the YEC programme, the development of the competencies of YEC mentor, and work to promote the idea of the programme.

Nationwide YEC programme partners:

- Krajowy Fundusz na Rzecz Dzieci (National Children's Fund) (as of 2016);
- Polsko-Niemiecka Współpraca Młodzieży (German-Polish Youth Cooperation) (as of 2018);
- Szkoła Edukacji Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego i Polsko-Amerykańskiej Fundacji Wolności (School of Education at the University of Warsaw and the Polish-American Freedom Foundation) (as of 2019).

Areas of activity of nationwide partners:

- Creation and sharing of educational resources;
- International cooperation – visits and exchanges between clubs;
- Activity addressed to YEC mentors, including meetings, workshops, conferences;
- Animation of cooperation of YEC mentors with scientists and academics.

Regional partners in Poland

Regional partners are institutions and organizations that expand YEC in their regions. They make sure that the programme is accessible, high quality and sustainable. Partners active in a region make it easier for YEC mentors to access workshops, conferences, and science picnics closer to their place of residence and the club's venue. They enable local clubs to exchange experiences on a regular basis.



Regional partners are responsible for:

- Supporting the development of the competencies of YEC members and mentors, including:
 - » Organizing at least one event per year for YEC mentors (the event profile is determined with the Copernicus Science Centre in discussion of the submitted “Action Plan”), with particular emphasis on workshops and trainings, local picnics and science festivals, and networking events for local clubs;
 - » Organizing events for local YEC clubs (including meetings with scientists and academics);
 - » Supporting clubs in cooperation with partners outside the YEC network (e.g., participation in SPiN Day, science picnics and festivals);
 - » Supporting clubs in the implementation of the programme objectives described in the “YEC Programme Charter”;
 - » Developing educational resources, including preparing and posting lesson plans and YEC inspirations on www.YEC.org.pl;
- Creating and supporting a group of trainers – two to three adults trained by Copernicus Science Centre specialists who will conduct trainings and workshops, including “How to run a YEC” workshops;
- Coordinating the community network of YEC mentors in their region, including:
 - » Designating a contact person to communicate with the Copernicus Science Centre;
 - » Designating a contact person to communicate with local clubs (this can be the same person who will be designated for contacts with the Copernicus Science Centre);
 - » Communicating within the YEC network in the region by, for example, sharing information in local communication channels about YEC activities, new projects offered to YEC mentors, including activities requiring support from the Copernicus Science Centre;
 - » Monitoring club activity in the regions to be able to effectively respond to the needs of said clubs;
 - » Participating in at least one annual meeting of YEC partners;
 - » By May 30 of each year, submitting an action plan for the partnership (according to the template provided by the Copernicus Science Centre);
 - » By the last day of June each year, preparing an annual report on the implementation of tasks declared in the action plan for the year (according to the template provided by the Copernicus Science Centre) and sending it to the Copernicus Science Centre;
 - » Ensuring the protection of the personal data of the participants in accordance with applicable law;
- Clearly marking affiliation with the YEC programme; using the YEC visual identity system in accordance with the YEC Logo Book.



Regional YEC programme partners (in order of entry into the programme):

- 2015 r. Ośrodek Doskonalenia Nauczycieli w Olsztynie (Teacher Training Centre in Olsztyn);
- Stowarzyszenie Upowszechniania Wiedzy ExploRes w Rzeszowie (ExploRes Knowledge Dissemination Association in Rzeszow);
- Politechnika Łódzka – Łódzki Uniwersytet Dziecięcy (Lodz University of Technology – Lodz Children’s University);
- 2017 r. Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Chełmie (State Higher Vocational School in Chelm);
- Politechnika Wrocławska (Wroclaw University of Technology);
- Zespół Szkół Technicznych Centrum Kształcenia Zawodowego i Ustawicznego w Lesznie (Technical School Complex of the Vocational and Continuing Education Centre in Leszno);
- Uniwersytet w Białymstoku (University of Białystok);
- 2018 r. Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach – Śląskie Międzyuczelniane Centrum Edukacji i Badań Interdyscyplinarnych (University of Silesia in Katowice – Silesian Inter-University Centre for Education and Interdisciplinary Research);
- Młodzieżowe Obserwatorium Astronomiczne im. Kazimierza Kordylewskiego w Niepołomicach (Kazimierz Kordylewski Youth Astronomical Observatory in Niepołomice);
- 2019 r. Uniwersytet Kazimierza Wielkiego w Bydgoszczy (Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz);
- Centrum Wsparcia Rzemiosła, Kształcenia Dualnego i Zawodowego w Kaliszu (Craft, Dual and Vocational Education Support Centre in Kalisz);
- Porozumienie Wyższej Szkoły Bankowej w Gdańsku oraz Dolnośląskiej Szkoły Wyższej we Wrocławiu (Agreement between the Higher School of Banking in Gdansk and the Lower Silesian Higher School in Wroclaw);
- 2022 r. Miejski Ośrodek Edukacji Nauczycieli w Bydgoszczy (Porozumienie Trójstronne z Uniwersytetem Kazimierza Wielkiego w Bydgoszczy) [Municipal Teacher Education Centre in Bydgoszcz (Tripartite Agreement with Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz)].

The Copernicus Science Centre and strategic, nationwide and regional partners implement programme activities under available financial resources and organizational capabilities.



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YEC programme abroad

Since 2009, YEC has been active abroad. The programme is expanding mainly in the East, where the needs for independence, proficiency, and a different-than-state way of teaching are similar to those in Poland. The first agreements with foreign partners, i.e. with Ilia State University in Tbilisi, Georgia, and Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania, were concluded by the Copernicus Science Centre in 2014 and 2016, respectively. Clubs have also been established in Ukraine and Belarus. In 2019, the Copernicus Science Centre signed a cooperation agreement with Mekelle University in Ethiopia.

The operation of YEC in the East is governed by the document "Model International Programme Development," developed by the Copernicus Science Centre, the YEC partner for Development in the East "Fundacja Szkoła z Klasą", and the strategic partner, i.e. the Polish-American Freedom Foundation. The "Fundacja Szkoła z Klasą" Foundation is responsible for implementing the model adopted in the document; the work is financed by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation.

YEC partner for Development in the East

In 2018, the Copernicus Science Centre entered into a cooperation agreement with the "Fundacja Szkoła z Klasą" Foundation. Pursuant to the agreement, the Centre and the Foundation, in consultation with the Polish-American Freedom Foundation, jointly decide on the choice of countries in which activity to build a local YEC network will be launched, the choice of foreign partners, the scope of activity and how the programme will be funded. Detailed actions concerning specific countries where YEC will be developed are regulated in separate documents.

Foreign partners

YEC programme partners in a given country are tasked with promoting and disseminating the programme within three years. They are supported in their efforts by the Copernicus Science Centre, the "Fundacja Szkoła z Klasą" Foundation, and the Polish-American Freedom Foundation. After three years, foreign partners independently develop the local YEC programme based on their own competence, financial resources and organizational capacity. They do this in cooperation in an international network of YEC communities.

Foreign partners are responsible for:

- Maintaining a team (including a coordinating institution, a team of trainers and coaches) to support the development of the programme and the activities carried out in it;
- Keeping records of active clubs;
- Acquiring, training and supporting YEC mentors;
- Organizing the national annual YEC Forum;
- Having its representative participate in the YEC Forum in Poland and the annual meeting of foreign partners;
- Sharing knowledge and content resources within the YEC community;



- Submitting an annual report on programme activities;
- Contact with partners and active YEC mentors from other countries, helping in establishing cooperation.

In 2022, the YEC network has the following foreign partners:

- Ilia State University in Tbilisi, Georgia (since 2014);
- Mekelle University in Mekelle, Ethiopia (starting in 2019);
- Ukrainian organization consortium: Ternopil Science Centre and Lvov's Dovzhenko Centre (as of 2020);
- Armenian organization consortium: Jinishian Memorial Foundation and Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory (as of 2021).

Foreign partner candidates:

- Scientifica in Romania.

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