

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Calling Planet Earth - Space Outreach To The General Public (4)

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UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES IN THE HUNGARIAN SPACE CAMP – LESSONS FROM 18
YEARS OF ORGANIZATION

Abstract

The Hungarian Astronautical Society (abbreviated as MANT in Hungarian) is a civil organization established in 1956. It gathers Hungarian space researchers, users of space technology and everyone who is interested in the interdisciplinary and state-of-the-art uses and research of outer space. Our aim is to raise public awareness about space exploration and uses. We also provide an opportunity for space enthusiasts to meet, exchange ideas and work together. The society, through its members from various fields of science, organizes conferences, youth forums, summer space camps, issues periodicals, releases media material and holds lectures about space research and connected scientific fields.

In 1994 our society started the series of the Hungarian Space Camps. The founder's intent was to introduce the space research and astronautics to the youth during a one-week-long summer camp. The participants are students between 13 and 18 who are interested in space and science. In the camp known Hungarian space researchers and astronautical scientists give lectures. The topics cover a broad range, from the basics of the space physics through the designing and making of the space dosimetric hardware Pille to the zero-G effects on the human body. We have offered different activities like water rocketry, underwater assembly, creating stereo pictures, taking scientific measurements with a rover, astronomical observations, operating a Lego rover from a Mission Control Room, meeting with the two trained Hungarian astronauts, working with an unmanned aerial vehicle etc. The program of the camp includes the visiting of the interesting places in the local neighborhood as well. The camp has a special emphasis on introducing space applications that affect our everyday life.

In our paper we briefly review the history of the space camp and how we could operate it on a non-profit basis. We introduce the organization structure, our main activities, and the selection process for students and lecturers. We highlight different challenges we met during organization and how we were able to increase the number of participants. We outline the camp's impact made on Hungarian space research during the 18 years of its existence. We believe these ideas could be beneficial for similar outreach activities as well.