Education & Outreach Activities of Turkey in 2021-2022

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Information Paper submitted by Turkey

Summary

This paper presents information on the education and outreach activities about “polar regions and global climate change” carried out in Turkey in 2021-2022.

Background

Education and outreach activities are carried out and given utmost importance by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) Marmara Research Center (MAM) Polar Research Institute (PRI) to explain the importance and role of polar regions to young generations. These events, ranging from seminar talks to festivals, not only appeal the youth but also intend to educate and inform audiences from all age groups.

2020-2021 Activities

TUBITAK MAM PRI opened a booth at TEKNOFEST, Turkey’s first and only aerospace and technology festival, which hosted more than 1.5 million visitors despite the pandemic conditions. Visitors were informed about the polar research and national polar activities by interacting with polar researchers in a fun environment (Figure 1). In addition, a short documentary targeting the young audience on climate change named “You Have a Message From the Poles!” was prepared by TUBITAK MAM PRI as a part of awareness activities. The premiere of the documentary was held at TEKNOFEST 2021 to a wide audience.

zemin, açık hava, kişi, insanlar içeren bir resim

Açıklama otomatik olarak oluşturuldu

*Figure 1.* A photo from the TUBITAK booth in TEKNOFEST 2021.

The first "Polar Research Projects Competition for High School Students" by TUBITAK attracted great interest with over 700 project submissions. The finalist projects were exhibited and the winners were announced at the TEKNOFEST in September 2021, where 22 projects in four different categories were awarded. TUBITAK opens this project call annually to meet the expectation of the intense interest from the young generation.

Although organized virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the first Polar Science Festival attracted the participation of many students throughout Turkey. TUBITAK MAM Polar Research Insitute organized the 2nd Polar Science Festival at the TUBITAK campus in Kocaeli on December 1, 2021, Antarctica Day. The festival achieved important success with the participation of more than ten thousand children from all over the country. The event mainly targets the young generation, as future polar scientists, to create awareness on polar regions and global climate change. Various activities including workshops, games, and exhibitions took place in the festival. While popular polar science seminars were given by scientists who conducted research in the polar regions, documentaries of Turkish polar expeditions were screened. In addition, the participants had fun moments with VR glasses, photo booths, polar research-themed comics, photo shooting in the polar regions with the green screen, and live music (Figure 2).

Personas en un escenario

Descripción generada automáticamente con confianza baja

*Figure 2*. A selection of activities in the 2nd Polar Science Festival

Meanwhile, PRI researchers contributed to printed and digital publications on polar regions with an educational aspect. "Polar Expeditions", a children’s book, was published by TUBITAK to introduce polar regions and polar research. Besides, a comic series on the adventures of a researcher in Antarctica continues in a TUBITAK magazine for kids with the contributions of PRI researchers.

In addition, active participation of the Polar Research Institute was ensured in education and awareness activities in different cities of Turkey throughout the year, namely the 8th Konya Science Festival, Erzurum Winter Science Festival, and Antalya Science Festival.

Conclusion

Since the day it was established, TUBITAK MAM PRI reached thousands of people in Turkey to inform them about the importance of polar research, polar regions, and their relation to global climate change. To this aim, a great awareness was created by organized events, printed publications, project competitions, online presentations & seminars, festivals, and documentaries.