

VIESSMANN



Climate Club Trophy



CLUB TROPHY

CASE STUDY UKS KAMIEŃCZYK

DREAMING OF LONG WINTERS, FULL OF SNOW

"We are dreaming about long winters, full of snow, like from the stories of our trainers and parents, hoping that our small and daily activities will someday make our dreams come true."

A statement by the UKS Kamieńczyk school children members.



Reforestation and clean-up action in the local forests



Training session on snow

WHAT IS THE GOAL?

The overarching goal of the School Children Sport Club Kamieńczyk (UKS Kamieńczyk), in partnership with the Karkonoski National Park (the Karkonoski National Park Education Department), and National Forestry (the Szklarska Poręba Forestry) is to fight for a better tomorrow.

Mainly over the past three years, since 2020, the club and its partners, have implemented a host of sustainability initiatives aimed at reducing their impact on the environment and inspiring others to do the same. These have included an extensive waste management programme, raising funding for social and environmental projects, and energy-saving initiatives.

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HOW IS THE GOAL ACHIEVED?

Many of the initiatives that have been implemented over the years are introduced at the request of the school children, aged 7-15, who form the large majority (roughly 90%) of club members.

These initiatives have been nurtured and cultivated by UKS Kamieńczyk's dedicated team of staff and volunteers. Former athlete and now trainer at the club, Kamila Buchla, was instrumental in furthering the club's work in this area. "Climate change is no joke," explains Kamila. "It's certainly not child's play. But our children, and their children, are the ones that will likely be most affected by its effects. Education plays a huge role in sensitising people, especially children, to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. I helped where I could, to open up new lines of education and sensitisation through collaboration with our partners."

The club's objectives are for its actions to become habit among members, and for its members to pass their experiences and knowledge on to schoolmates, friends, parents, and others. The idea being that actions are more impactful when the children are sharing their own ideas about sustainability, rather than them being force fed by adults or teachers. As a result, this authentic approach helps to promote the values of club itself.



Education Centre of the Karkonosze National Park

WHICH IBU SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES DOES IT ADDRESS?

Lacking sustainability awareness among biathlon stakeholders

- The local forests of the Izera Mountains were destroyed due to an environmental catastrophe in the 1970s and 80s caused by an increase in industrial activities in the region. Once or twice a year, UKS Kamieńczyk takes part in reforestation and clean-up actions in cooperation with the National Forestry. Tree planting and clean-up actions are aimed at reversing some of the negative effects of tourism. The National Forestry provides the clean-up equipment as well as the transportation of litter from the forest to the recycling point.
- The club uses the Active Giving app, through which individuals and organisations can contribute to social and environmental projects by participating in physical activities. Use of the app led to the implementation of education projects, seminars and workshops on such topics as tree planting for club members, in cooperation with the professional staff of the National Forestry and the Education Centre of the Karkonosze National Park.

Lead toxicity

- Lead ammunition shells are collected by coaches and event organisers and delivered to a recycling point where they are sold and the funds used for other sustainability initiatives, such as reusable water bottles, minimally packaged boxes, and reusable material competition bags.

Unsustainable food & beverage provision

- The club introduced larger amounts of vegetables, fruits and nuts into their members' diets and reduced the amount of meat they offered after training sessions and during camps and competitions. Now, instead of building a grill to cook sausages, members are cooked hearty meals involving pasta, rice, and vegetables, as well as fresh fruits.



Reusable bags instead of disposable ones

Waste production

- UKS Kamieńczyk places special emphasis on waste management, including waste reduction, separation, and the reuse of certain goods. The club feels that initiatives, such as collecting plastic bottle lids to fund charitable projects, teaches the children to separate recyclable waste. Electronic waste, including batteries, can be brought to the club and sent, from there, to the recycling point.
- The recycling of paper, plastic, biodegradable waste, glass, and aluminium also takes place at the club. Garden and food waste is used as compost for the club's two gardens, on which it grows plants and vegetables, such as apples and carrots.
- At least once a year, on the school's sports day, the club organises a sports clothing exchange and/or sale between younger and older athletes at a school fair.

Unsustainable sourcing practices

- The club imposed a ban on single-use plastics at training and competitions, which led to the use of reusable water bottles or paper cups, as well as food packaged in recyclable cardboard boxes, instead of plastic bags.
- At the children's request, all members must use their own named bags instead of disposable ones at training and competitions. Apparently, they preferred this option because the bags were similar to those used by professional biathletes!
- The club has a policy to opt for using minimally packaged goods and food, that is preferably provided in recyclable packaging.

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES FACED?

The children would prefer to ski rather than to go running in the rain in November or December. However, shorter training seasons on the snow are now a reality for UKS Kamieńczyk. Along with this comes many logistical challenges, in terms of organising training or competitions – for example, even when older children are sent out to collect snow for the course, there have been occasions when rain has completely destroyed the course and the possibility of training or competition. Unfortunately, the club's roller ski courses are not very good but the fact is that the children spend far more time roller skiing than they would prefer these days.



Karkonosze National Park

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

UKS Kamieńczyk receives very good feedback from its members and the children's parents on its approach to environmental sustainability. It aims to continue to develop the initiatives it currently runs and creates new ones with the support of club members, other school children, and the parents themselves – who it sees as having a huge potential, in turn, to educate club members.