



Remember about yourself

Building the motivation and mental resilience of educators and volunteers of the English Teaching in Poland program



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Introduction

Can demanding tasks that are truly challenging be a way to strengthen oneself? The summer work of teachers and volunteers in the Teaching English in Poland program proves this statement true. As Jolanta Sujecka-Zajac points out in her article, the participation of staff in TEIP camps provides an opportunity to experience self-efficacy. Seeing students make successful attempts to communicate in a foreign language, teachers become convinced that their work has meaning.

When teachers get together at a camp after a full year of school work, it is possible to be tired. And stress and frustration significantly reduce their sense of confidence and agency. They need reinforcement and a break from the usual work routine. And that's the chance they get to succeed. They start work with the conviction that they can do something new, unusual, and much needed. They meet children who are ready to take part in a shared adventure, usually better motivated than students at school, undertaking tasks voluntarily and without fear of evaluation.

Volunteers who choose to teach at TEIP camps are received with respect, gratitude, and confidence in the potential with which they volunteer for the program. Social persuasion works, and difficulties become easier to overcome. Being aware of all the hopes that others place in them also helps the volunteers. They can gather positive experiences every day, as we learn from Amelie Czekaj's article. She writes that participating in the program has been an extremely enriching experience for her.

Preparing activities for students one is yet to get to know, finding out what their interests are, accommodating differences in language proficiency, and encountering a distinct culture is quite a challenge for teachers. They are required to be well prepared and highly flexible. However, the work put into developing a program, searching for good materials, and boldly taking on an intellectual challenge are powerful sources of motivation, growth, and renewal. They all help in fending off professional burnout, not to mention brief emotional weariness.

Working with children and adolescents during a TEIP language camp fosters teachers' recognition of their own internal resources and the development of positive ties with the environment, which, as Alicja Gałązka shows in her article, makes it possible to increase one's level of resilience. This is followed by self-esteem and self-care. It is gratifying to be able to be good to yourself and others.

Approving the activities and the appreciation of the commitment of the camp staff and the satisfaction of achieving even small successes are essential for creating a good learning atmosphere. Teachers' peace of mind and mental well-being are also extremely necessary for students. They, too, need self-confidence and the belief that the goals set are achievable and the difficulties surmountable. As Snoopy sings, *If just one person believes in you, Deep enough and strong enough...*

In the videos prepared during this year's edition of the program, we can see how the idea of cooperation between teachers from Poland, Ukraine, and the US, as well as the attitudes of self-confidence and self-belief, are put into practice during the TEIP camps.

Grażyna Czetwertyńska

President of The Kosciuszko Foundation Poland



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About the Teaching English in Poland program

Aleksandra Kujawska

The Teaching English in Poland (TEIP) program implemented by the Kosciuszko Foundation is a form of English language promotion among Polish youth. It combines leisure with improving English language skills and learning about the elements of US culture. The formula of the summer or residential camp has basically remained unmodified for 30 years: we offer an opportunity to improve English under the supervision of experienced American teachers during a two-week vacation camp. In the mornings, there are usually classes in groups formed according to language proficiency level and age, while the afternoon consists of workshops in groups that bring together young people with similar interests and talents. American teachers and their assistants conduct interactive classes in English that allow Polish students to enrich their vocabulary related to US culture, history, geography, customs, and traditions. It's a time when young people learn to talk about their emotions, express their opinions, and discuss a song or movie. They can talk about basically any topic. There is only one condition: you have to speak English. American teachers are recruited by the Kosciuszko Foundation team in New York. It's an open-ended process, with the idea of teaching English as an essential component. In language classes, the emphasis is on developing and improving communication skills and, above all, on breaking down barriers that can prevent pupils from speaking English. "The biggest benefit of participating in the TEIP program is learning without the pressure imposed by school. Students learn so much in two weeks. Without even realizing they are gaining knowledge. We focus

on the practical use of English," says Kristin Miller, TEIP volunteer leader, about our method of work. We strive to ensure that camps conducted as part of the TEIP program are the result of close cooperation between Polish and American staff members. This allows us to introduce qualitative changes both in the methodology of language teaching and in the preparation of Polish and American staff to work together at the camp. This yields better educational results and greater student and parent. We hope that this will result in increased interest from other centers in joining the TEIP program and that the camps will become an attractive offer for volunteers, who will be able to improve their inter-cultural dialogue, linguistic, and so-called soft skills. For each language camp, a team of more than a dozen teachers and assistants from the US arrives in Poland. Its leader is responsible for the preparation of the language curriculum and its smooth implementation. The Polish camp manager is responsible for all activities carried out at the camp. The staff consisting of Polish tutors and teachers also reports to the Polish head. Since 2018, TEIP has been undergoing major changes. First of all, we are adapting it to the dynamic social and economic situation in Poland. We hope to spread our offer primarily to students from outside of metropolitan areas, where opportunities for meeting a native English speaker are significantly limited. The Kosciuszko Foundation Poland team not only seeks to establish cooperation with more schools and community organizations but also systematically standardizes TEIP's curricula, evaluation methods, and the conditions of participation for students and volunteers. One could conclude that the TEIP program

is in a constant process of change, which is obvious if we consider that we are teaching about two countries (Poland and the US) whose society, culture, and economic situation are also constantly evolving.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE TEIP PROGRAM

Cultural exchange:

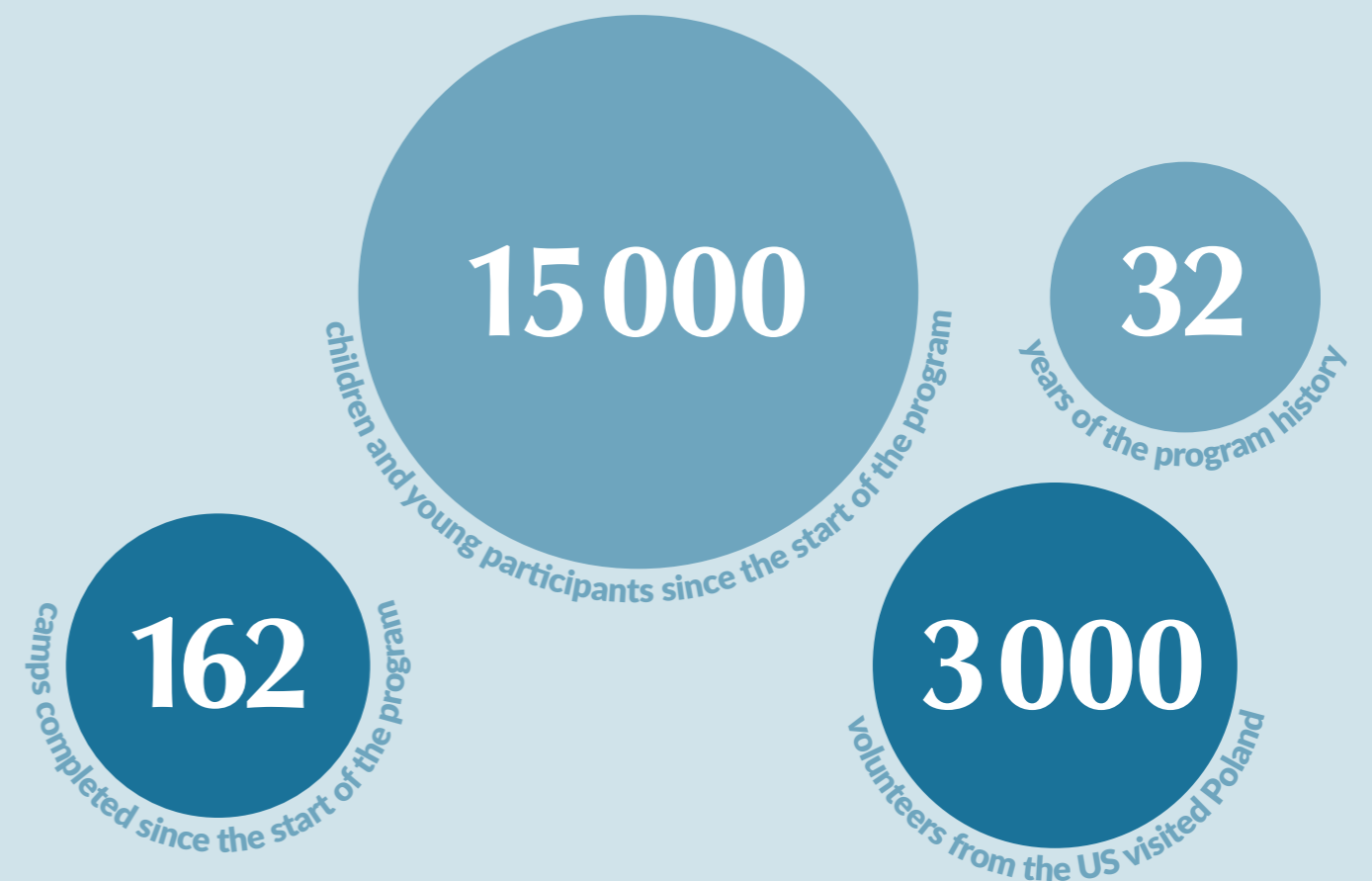
- Enabling financially disadvantaged children and young people from Poland to immerse themselves in the English language and American culture;
- Familiarizing Polish children and young people with various aspects of American life and culture;
- Acquainting American teachers with Poland and its culture, history, and traditions in the hope that their knowledge and impressions will be passed on to their students, families, friends, and communities in the United States;
- Encouraging local communities in Poland to host American volunteers and share their own experiences with them;
- Promoting an open approach to cultural and social diversity among both the Polish and American communities.

Developing the social skills of camp participants:

- Formation of civic attitudes and intercultural competencies, including diplomacy, social and cultural awareness and expression, as well as responsibility and commitment;
- Developing key competencies of the future, such as cooperation, problem solving, creativity, innovative thinking, entrepreneurship, agency, and autonomy

Developing language skills:

- Providing Polish children and young people with a variety of experiences with the English language in the American cultural context;
- Improving and developing the communication skills of camp participants;
- Engaging all language skills to ensure interactive communication in the English language;
- Providing interdisciplinary learning opportunities that utilize the English language as a tool to develop Polish campers' skills in math, science, technology, sports, music, literature, and art;
- Developing students' confidence in using English on a daily basis.



Professional development of teachers:

- Improving the teaching and methodological competence of Polish and American staff of the language camps;
- Mutual learning and observation of the teaching methods used;
- Establishing contacts between Polish and American educators to develop the cooperation and intercultural competence of both educators and campers;
- Enabling Polish teachers and assistants to enhance their English proficiency;
- Creating, updating and developing teaching resources that can be used and adapted by TEIP camp staff and other English teachers.

The main principles of cooperation in the TEIP program

1. Provide adequate infrastructure for teaching groups of up to 20.
2. Provide the residential camps with accommodation, adequate sanitary facilities, and a canteen for Polish and American students and staff.
3. Supply educational materials, teaching aids and art tools that were agreed upon by both parties in advance.
4. Provide transportation for a group of volunteers from the United States from the airport and to the airport on their return flight.
5. Ensure members of the American personnel have liability insurance.
6. Organize a 3-day trip for American volunteers after the language classes and pay all costs of the trip.
7. Ensure there are Polish educators, preferably English language teachers.
8. Appoint a Polish teacher to serve as the head of the Polish staff, and allow the head of the American staff to contact this person. •

7
camps in 2023

79
days of having fun together in 2023

210
Ukrainian children participated in the camps in 2023

400
Polish children participated in the camps 2023

66
American volunteers taught during the TEIP camps in 2023

TEACHING ENGLISH IN POLAND – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

American staff leaders

Experienced volunteers, managing the American staff on their respective camps. They are responsible for communication with Polish organisers, working alongside with the Kosciuszko Foundation during the camp preparation phase as well as supervising the organization and teaching activities.

Volunteers

American volunteers from all walks of life and of many different professions. They come to Poland to teach English to Polish students, as well as actively spend time with them. Among our volunteers there's of course a lot of teachers, but also professional pastry chefs, yoga teachers or former FBI agents. During TEIP camps they not only teach English as a foreign language in a classroom, but also give cooking lessons, play sports, do arts and crafts but also provide children with knowledge on how to collect... fingerprints.

Polish organizers

A school/local government body/NGO responsible for the organization of TEIP camp in Poland as well as contacts with the Kosciuszko Foundation.

Polish Staff

Polish teachers working hand in hand with the American volunteers during camps. Experienced and enthusiastic educators, they teach classes, organize sport lessons and events, do arts and crafts and take the participants out for trips and themed events.

TEIP summer camp

Almost two weeks of good fun and learning English from American volunteers and Polish teachers. Active recreation and immersive English learning all day long, even during the meals, playtime and free time.

Task based learning

Its main focus is to „submerge” the student in the language by using it not only during class, but also extracurricular activities! Students go over their fear of speaking by simple everyday interactions. By talking to the volunteers about their hobbies and interests, the schedule or simply by asking them to pass the salt during lunch – they're practicing without even knowing it!

Teacher assistant

Teacher assistants are younger volunteers working alongside their more experienced colleagues.

Post TEIP camp trip for American volunteers

After the TEIP camp is over, American volunteers get some well-deserved rest as they go on a trip around Poland for a few days. They get to see more of Poland's beautiful scenery, historic sites as well as lively cities.



“

For the dedicated staff, almost every moment in Poland was a cherished memory. Visiting historical landmarks such as the art museum and castle in Łańcut, the Wieliczka salt mines, the old synagogue in Cracow, and the Royal Palace in Warsaw, each experience was a journey of enrichment. For several of the staff members with Polish roots, the experience was the first time connecting directly with and learning about their ancestral homeland of Poland, and immersing themselves in the nation's history and culture was both educational and profound.

Kirstin Miller

TEIP American volunteer
staff leader

Psychological flexibility and resilience as predictors of teacher well-being

Our greatness is not that we never fall, but that we are able to rise after every fall

Confucius

Alicja Gałązka

Resilience is a skill that we can develop and deepen. Teachers, as people who are particularly vulnerable to the stresses and strains of their jobs, can make a conscious effort to increase their level of resilience.

Why does a teacher need psychological flexibility and resilience?

We live in a time of chaos, unpredictability, and uncertainty. We are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with a flurry of emotions, with minor setbacks and increasing demands. More and more people, even the very young, are getting psychiatric help by taking antidepressants or stimulants. The events of recent years have significantly affected our mental health and set in motion new patterns of behavior. Teachers who are significantly exposed to the pressures of their jobs, and consequently, to high levels of burnout, need a skill that would allow them to cope with feelings of overwhelm and frustration. Increasingly, we are seeing the importance of our intrapersonal skills, or those related to self-management and metacognition. We are talking about the competencies of the future, which have been identified by the World Economic Forum and the Institute for the Future as the skills needed to function in the Fourth Industrial Age, dominated by digitalization. One such skill, widely described in recent times, is 'resilience', which we can translate as mental toughness.

What is resilience?

According to the definition of the American Psychological Association (2014), resilience is the process of skillful adaptation in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, and various types of threats and stresses arising both from personal and professional life (family, financial, health, work problems). Resilience, therefore, is the ability or process of human adaptation to changing conditions, adaptation in relation to the environment, self-awareness, plasticity of the mind, the ability to recover lost or weakened strength, and resistance to harmful factors. The ability to bounce back from difficult situations (bounce back effect) and the ability to recover from the stresses and difficult situations experienced. It's emotional resilience to a reality that doesn't always change in our favor and the ability to adapt to new conditions. Resilience is one of the key constructs considered in the field of positive psychology in the context of the study of two areas: social skills and the individual's internal protective forces and ability to sustain positive emotions (Carbonell et al., 1998). An individual's level of resilience reflects his or

her mental capacity to adapt and recover after experiencing difficult situations and challenges in life (Ryff et al., 1998). It is the process by which an individual uses his or her potential, competencies, and strengths to counteract the negative effects of the traumas and stresses he or she has experienced in order to consequently strengthen his or her mental construct using the experiences he or she has had. Individuals with high levels of resilience are more likely to take on challenges and risky behaviors because they have greater insight and awareness of their competence and ability to cope with failure.

Some researchers emphasize that negative emotional experiences or adversity are needed (Block & Kremen, 1996) for an individual to develop resilience. Others argue that a successful adaptation process of a challenge or emerging difficulty develops resilience (Oliver et al., 2006). Psychological resilience allows a person to achieve tasks and goals despite emerging problems and difficulties and to maintain stable well-being in stressful situations. According to Southwick et al. (2014), it is difficult to grasp the complexity of resilience and its determinants. It is an individual trait determined by a number of biopsychological and cultural factors that determine how effectively a person copes with a stressful situation.

Resilience vs. individual stress moderators in the work of a teacher

The concept of resilience/mental resilience is closely related to the phenomenon of stress because mental resilience is essentially manifested in the ability to cope with stressful situations. Stress can be a motivating factor for action and greater activity, but it can also cause frustration, withdrawal, total exhaustion, professional burnout and depression. More and more teachers are experiencing professional burnout, which impacts in their professional and private lives. Frequent emotional tension, aversion to all interactions, hypersensitivity in responding to various stimuli, and even reluctance to go to work for fear of having to complete tasks, are common symptoms of burnout and excessive stress. Numerous studies show that the most stressful factors are excessive workload, time pressure, and a sense of control. Ev-

ery person encounters stress, which, as mentioned above, can be seen as a causal or inhibitory factor and determine an individual's performance. It is the interaction between the individual and the situation that determines the individualized level of resistance to stress and the zone of optimal functioning. Various differentiating factors have been studied that may constitute individual moderators of stress, such as the level of anxiety (Spilberger 1983), the level of self-esteem or the individual's metaprograms. A teacher, a seemingly confident person, often struggles (often unconsciously) with low self-esteem, or high levels of anxiety, which influence the perception of situations as more or less threatening. Another differentiating factor may be metaprograms, or styles of sorting information. These are models consisting of a set of distinctions by which people filter, sort, and organize sensory information, creating and maintaining their reality and understanding of it. The role of metaprograms is to decide which bits of information to pay attention to (and, naturally, which bits to leave out). We distinguish between many metaprograms such as:

- Striving - Avoiding
- Me - Others
- External authority - Internal authority
- Similarities - Differences
- General - Detailed
- Options - Procedures

Let's analyze the pattern: **striving-avoidance**. This mechanism is based on an assumption derived from behavioral psychology, which assumes that some people strive to achieve a goal and feel pleasure, and other focus on avoiding problems and unpleasant stimuli. According to this filter, we differentiate people into those who are away from the problem, i.e.:

- they avoid, get rid of, and stay away from what they don't want or don't like,
- they identify problems and tend to focus on them, and what once didn't work may not work out or won't work out again,
- they focus on obstacles and weaknesses,
- they eliminate threats, obstacles,

- they are afraid of what might go wrong,
- they have difficulty formulating a positive goal,
- they generate negative consequences.

And those who are up to the mark, that is:

- they are striving, moving in the direction of what they want and what they like,
- they often have difficulty recognizing what to avoid,
- they often minimize negative consequences and are even indifferent to what doesn't work or goes wrong,
- they respond to profits and the 'carrot' (as opposed to the stick!),
- they focus on the goal,
- they do something for reward, profit, other benefits,
- they are motivated by positive incentives (reward),
- they may have difficulty avoiding problems,
- diminish the importance of problems and their negative consequences.

Example:

Two people are going on vacation to Italy. The first one says: I'm going to Italy because I want the sun to shine for two weeks. The second one says: I'm going to Italy because I don't want it to rain for two weeks.

Metaprograms are neither good nor bad. Each can be used in an appropriate way in a particular situation. The example above, however, raises the observation that people with an 'away from' metaprogram are those who are more focused on problems and concerns and therefore may be more likely to experience higher levels of anxiety. They are a valuable resource in project work when analyzing risks, but they may also have an overly anxious and pessimistic view of reality. Rachel Jackson and Chris Watkin (2004) further point to factors such as:

- precision in analyzing events,
- number of imagined possible scenarios,
- flexibility, and
- the internal need to face new challenges.

All of the aforementioned factors are significantly related to our thinking patterns and our own beliefs, which are often limited and act on 'autopilot'. The greater the insight into our cognitive patterns and the ability to recognize them, the better we can control and regulate our cognitive and emotional reactions. Flexibility of thinking seems to be particularly important for the development of resilience.

Psychological flexibility as a basis for resilience

Psychological flexibility is a concept widely described in classic contextual behavioral science. Psychological flexibility (inflexibility) is the ability of an individual to behave in accordance with his own beliefs and values; it is the ability to be fully in touch with the present moment and the thoughts and feelings that arise without being unnecessarily defensive. Mental inflexibility is the rigid dominance of mental reactions over chosen values and conditions. The essence of mental flexibility is the ability to deal with different situations in different ways, especially in order to respond effectively to new, complex, and problematic situations that arise frequently in a teacher's work. Mental flexibility is also a tool that helps one live in harmony with one's beliefs, thoughts, and emotions and, on the other hand, allows one to regulate these emotions in an effective way. If a person is ready to deal with any situation, adapts flexibly to the world, and can overcome any adversity and challenge, thanks to their own adaptive abilities, as if stretching their 'emotional ropes'. Lack of flexibility in the situation experienced often triggers anxiety, and this leads to frustration and aggression towards oneself and others.

Psychological flexibility as presented by Hayens is a model consisting of six key processes that provide an individual with the ability to adapt flexibly:

- acceptance,
- cognitive diffusion,
- contact with the here and now,
- regarding oneself as context,
- values and engagement in action.

This model became the basis for the creation of acceptance and commit-

ment-based therapy, which can effectively improve the development of resilience in any individual struggling with high emotional strain at work and in private life.

How to strengthen the level of resilience in yourself?

Resilience is a skill that we can develop and deepen. Teachers, as people who are particularly vulnerable to the stresses and strains of their jobs, can make a conscious effort to increase their level of resilience. Here are some important principles:

- becoming aware of what thought patterns are blocking me, limiting me, and taking control of them,
- developing a sense of agency,
- developing our own internal resources, which we often sabotage or underestimate,
- developing positive ties with others

(while eliminating toxic, aggravating relationships),

- taking a meta position especially in difficult, conflict situations, that is, observing oneself without emotional involvement,
- the development of empathy with ourselves, that is, caring for ourselves, turning off the critical voice that often sabotages our actions,
- the development of gratitude toward oneself and others,
- physical activity, proper nutrition and sleep.

It is worthwhile to reflect on our own emotional state and mental health in order to derive greater satisfaction from our own work and life. No one can do it for us if we don't take action ourselves. The better the mental health of teachers is, the more effective their teaching, and the healthier their relationships with students are. •

Professor Alicja Gałazka Psychologist, linguist, licensed coach, trainer and educator. Academic employee of the University of Silesia. Expert in drama, a method used in education, interpersonal training, management and therapy. Founder and director of the FUTURE Education Center. Coordinator of two sections of Psychology in ELT and Drama in ELT at IATEFL Poland.

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If TEIP is an opportunity that interests you, an open mind and open heart are the main requirements. The days can be long. The schedules can shift on a dime, and sometimes you have to have plans C, D, and E before you even know it. If you can go with the flow and embrace the experience for what it is and as it comes, it will be the adventure of a lifetime and an opportunity to change the lives of many students.

Angelique Marya Bolding
Volunteer at the TEIP camp
in Basznia Dolna

Foreign language teachers' sense of self-efficacy as a factor in enhancing well-being in a crisis situation



Jolanta Sujecka-Zajac

Teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy turn out to be more innovative, open to the needs of students, are not discouraged by failures, persistently look for the right solutions, are optimistic, and better manage difficult emotions like stress or frustration.

Foreign language teachers, though not exclusively, face in a very demanding way the special challenges of education in the 21st century. On the one hand, we can see many factors that positively influence the quality of school teaching practice due to wide access to up-to-date glottodidactic knowledge, a rich publishing offer of textbooks and educational materials, or the possibility of using the resources of the global network in language classes, but on the other hand, there is no shortage of alarming signs of increasing professional burnout resulting in leaving the profession, low enrollment in teacher education paths at universities, or problems related to both the physical and mental health of active teachers. This implies the need to look for elements of teachers' lives that may prove supportive to the sustainability of their chosen professional path. It is in this context that we turn our attention to a very important factor, according to research, which is self-efficacy. This term was introduced into the scientific circuit by Canadian-American psychologist Albert Bandura in the 1970s and was further developed and supplemented by the au-

thor and his colleagues until the 2000s. In the following reflection, this concept will be characterized primarily on the ground of language education, then we will point out its relationship with other elements supporting teacher effectiveness; furthermore, we will discuss activities that have a positive impact on the strength of self-efficacy, and finally, we will refer to the context of language teaching in a non-formal situation, using the example of the Teaching English in Poland program run by the Kosciuszko Foundation.

Self-efficacy among language teachers: data analysis

Self-efficacy is one of the concepts that turns out to be central to the social learning theory (Bandura 1997), in which individual behavior in a given situation is the result of the interaction of individual and social factors. It is therefore impossible to categorically indicate what is responsible for one or another human action. This is because it is a certain system that causes a feedback loop between the person, the environment, and the situation. Such

is also the nature of educational situations, and the search for a single element that determines the success or failure of a given action is doomed to fail at the very start. However, it is possible to recognize the strength of the influence of individual elements. We are talking about a certain personal conviction about one's competence and skills in a given area, thoughts of the type "I know I can do it, I can handle this situation", which allow one to take action, and then a significant involvement of cognitive and emotional resources in the implementation of the project (Pajares 1996, Juczynski 2000). If an individual is convinced that he or she can undertake a task because he or she considers his or her resources adequate or sufficient, he or she will persistently pursue the set goal despite the obstacles and barriers encountered. They will make every effort to complete the task because the scale of her commitment matches the scale of self-efficacy they internally possess (Graham 2022). In a sense, we are talking about someone's self-belief, but it is a belief rooted in an experience that has produced a measurable result.

Studies of self-efficacy specifically related to language learning and teaching emerged relatively late, mainly in the early 21st century (cf. Wyatt 2018). They mainly concern teachers in the situation of teaching a language outside the target country, which focuses researchers' attention on the level of teachers' linguistic competence and, in addition, on certain specific aspects of the language classroom, such as students' lack of motivation to learn languages other than English, attitudes toward inclusive didactics, teaching strategies, classroom diversity, or students' cognitive dysfunctions. However, regardless of the research topic undertaken, researchers agree on the positive impact of self-efficacy on the teaching activity undertaken. Teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy turn out to be more innovative, open to the needs of students, are not discouraged by failures, persistently look for the right solutions, are optimistic, and better manage difficult emotions like stress or frustration. In order to properly develop a sense of self-efficacy, appropriate mechanisms for its formation and strengthening are needed.

Shaping and developing self-efficacy in language teachers

Albert Bandura pointed to four main sources that shape the strength of self-efficacy (Bandura 1997):

- personal experience of success (*mastery (performance) experience*): any person who has achieved success in an activity and is convinced that he or she can repeat it, referring to his or her resources of knowledge, competence and skills, thereby building his or her self-efficacy. Raoofi et al. (2012:61) emphasize that references to past experiences thus have a significant impact on current actions and thinking about one's effectiveness,
- social modeling (vicarious experience) is observing others around you performing activities of interest, drawing conclusions for yourself, and using the strategies you notice, especially if you consider them effective for the success of a task with someone who is an important personal reference for the learner, all leading to an increased sense of self-efficacy,
- social persuasion is a type of messages that come from those around that encourage an individual to undertake and continue the task, expressing the belief that the person will cope with the difficulties because he or she has the resources to do so,
- emotional states (*physiological states/emotional arousal*) such as anxiety, fatigue or stress, and frustration reduce self-efficacy, while positive emotions (joy, contentment, satisfaction with performance) increase it.

Looking at the sources of self-efficacy indicated above, we can well identify supportive contexts for activities that will prove to be empowering for language teachers. It is worth recalling here the voices of teachers who spoke directly about this in another of the author's studies (Sujecka-Zajac, Szymankiewicz 2023, in print). When asked what most strongly influences self-efficacy, one respondent wrote:

When I see that my actions produce real results, e.g., I tried a new idea to engage a stu-

dent who doesn't want to do anything and succeeded in getting him or her to do minimal activity; I changed the way I grade papers and it made students stop copying them from the Internet; when I see that people who were ashamed to speak up at the beginning start to participate willingly in the lesson, are not afraid to make mistakes and make an effort; when someone who had difficulty with a particular issue finally understands it because I explained it appropriately for that person. When I see that a student's progress is due to my actions. (P03).

Another statement raises a very similar point:

When I see students breaking down barriers and starting to learn more, and trying to converse in French, I feel that my work is effective. (P25).

This voice is very clearly part of the phenomenon of accumulating positive experiences described in the first point, to which would be added both the emotional and social aspects, that is, the support of the community or governing bodies.

From these brief analyses, it follows that one should multiply opportunities to accumulate positive experiences, learn about the power of external support, and see students' success as a direct consequence of one's teaching activities. Hence, in our opinion, the great value of programs in which learning a foreign language happens in a non-formal context and therefore in a much more concentrated method from

both the relational and cognitive sides. An example of this are the activities conducted in the Teaching English in Poland program.

Building self-efficacy in the context of non-formal foreign language teaching

In the context of the issue discussed here, it is worth highlighting the significant role of activities such as those conducted in the Teaching English in Poland program, organized by the Kosciuszko Foundation, in which American volunteers together with a group of Polish educators conduct classes for children during 2-week summer camps in Poland.

Participation in summer language courses is beneficial for both volunteers and Polish teachers, who profit from all the opportunities described above to develop and enhance their sense of self-efficacy, as they can directly observe students' progress, involvement, and emotions, and thus have a 'mastery experience'. At the same time, they receive what has been called 'social persuasion', a type of feedback from both students and others involved in teaching situations, and they themselves can experience and accumulate positive emotions that reduce stress and increase intrinsic motivation. Intense experience of this type, necessarily less present in the context of formal foreign language learning, can prove to be a very powerful stimulus to persistently pursue educational goals and face challenges in a positive way, seeing them as developmental potential rather than a threat. •

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I've been teaching for a long time, so it's easy to feel burned out. However the experience of the two summers with TEIP program helped me hit the reset button. I was born to be a teacher, there has never been a job that I liked better, but I came back from Poland loving the experience of learning. I continue to learn as much from the students as they do from me. Education is a shared experience whether it's here in the US or overseas. I'll never be the same again.

Toni Bourgea

TEIP volunteer at the camp
in Basznia Dolna

How coaching techniques help teachers take care of their well-being: two practical examples

*What we think about ourselves
and the world makes us who we
are and who we can be*

Ken Robinson

Katarzyna Kacorzyk

Changing our thought patterns may not be easy, but it is possible. This does not aim at suppression, but focusing on what builds strength, what supports you and gives positive energy.

We need to become aware of our thought patterns, especially if they are blocking us in action and limiting us, and this concerns our beliefs and attitudes.

We all have our beliefs and thinking patterns: there may be some that support us, but more often there are those that have nothing to do with support. Identifying one's beliefs, attitudes and thinking patterns is the first step to reduce their impact on their lives and jobs. This falls within the scope of coaching or mental training, among other things.

Let's start with a definition: what are beliefs or attitudes? They are our views, the assumptions that we believe hold true, that we make consciously or unconsciously, and that, to a large extent, control our lives (our thoughts, decisions, behavior). We acquire them through our experiences, including in the process of upbringing, for example: "The first million must be stolen", "Life is beautiful".

I now invite you to look at yourself and your teaching work in the context of thought patterns and beliefs. I assume that this will be a short but opening and inspiring adventure that will help you take care of your well-being. Education, school work and the teaching profession are not free of

thought patterns, attitudes and beliefs.

What thoughts have just crossed your mind? Are you thinking about attitudes you have toward yourself, your school, your work, toward your role as a teacher?

Let's take a look at the following examples.

- My work as a teacher has no impact.
- Everything rests on my shoulders.
- I'm not good enough as a teacher.
- Parents are all against me.
- I don't have time for professional development.

Do these thoughts sound familiar? Do you identify with them? Or do you have others, but equally demotivating? Write them down, we'll come back to them further on. Each of the above, beliefs, most probably including yours as well, are negative thoughts that are not helpful to you. Think for a moment what consequences this way of thinking have for you? You can write them down.

Now, read what I gather is the significance of your beliefs. They:

- Take away the sense of purpose;
- Lower self-esteem and sense of agency;

- Demotivate;
- Exacerbate feelings of loneliness;
- Create an image of your professional life as a life failure.

- What do you believe in?
- And what do you want to believe in?
- Do your beliefs build your strength?
- What can I already do today?

Do you think my conclusions are correct?

Now, can you look at the examples of beliefs differently? Can they be transformed into more supportive beliefs listed above that will help build your more positive attitudes?

How can this be done? Let's give it a try:

- My work as a teacher has no impact -> My work has a huge impact on the development of students.
- Everything rests on my shoulders -> I can work effectively with other teachers and other school staff.
- I am not good enough as a teacher. -> I am a teacher who is constantly developing and learning.
- Parents are all against me. -> Co-operation with parents is crucial to students' success.
- I don't have time for professional development. -> I prioritize my professional development, knowing its impact on the quality of teaching.

If you put down your examples of beliefs before, try now to work on them the way that I have done above, and also write them down.

What does this new way of thinking, new thought pattern, change for you? Feel free to write down what you discovered. I definitely find these new assumptions positive (they give a sense of agency).

And now, I invite you to think about, and answer the following questions:

This simple exercise demonstrates the enormous impact of how we think and what we focus our attention on. Changing beliefs may not be easy, but it is possible. This does not aim at suppression, but focusing on what builds strength, what supports you and gives positive energy.

Finally, I invite you to do one more exercise, which is to make a list of your core values.

Ask yourself a question and write your answer down:

- What is important to you?
- What brings you joy?
- What are your dreams?

It may sound trivial, but this knowledge and developing your awareness will work for you. It's because when I know why I do my job, it's much easier for me to find motivation, meaning, recover from more difficult moments, and above all, prevent professional burnout.

Example: *My objective is that my family are safe – my core value is family security. If I know this, I organize my life, including work, in such a way as to achieve this goal.*

In conclusion, teachers should take care of their well-being; and this is also their right. It's enough to use available tools, opportunities and support.

"The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can change their lives by changing the attitude of their minds (...) If you change your mind, you can change your life" William James •

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Being a volunteer in Teaching English in Poland Program



Amelie Czekaj

How did I become a volunteer of the Teaching English in Poland program?

My journey to become a volunteer with TEIP began in college when I studied abroad in Spain and Italy. Those experiences living abroad instilled a lifelong love of travel and languages in me.

The benefits of teaching English in a Polish-Ukrainian group of TEIP camp participants

The TEIP program afforded me with the opportunity to learn about my husband's Polish heritage alongside my two daughters and my husband. In the summer of 2023 I participated in my fifth TEIP camp with my family in Zqb. It was my first experience as a leader and the first time that I taught both Polish and Ukrainian students. The addition of the Ukrainian students and staff enriched our camp experience immeasurably. The Ukrainian contingent participated in the English classes and activities along with the Polish students with enthusiasm in the picturesque Tatra mountains. They opened

their minds and hearts to their new surroundings and taught us about their culture through songs and dancing.

Building a professional community of volunteers and teachers of the Teaching English in Poland program

Traveling to Poland with TEIP and experiencing the culture and customs of Poland and Ukraine is a uniquely fulfilling and special experience. I shared these experiences with amazing volunteers from the United States, Poland and Ukraine who generously gave their time and effort to make the camp the best it could possibly be for everyone involved.

Personal and professional development of TEIP volunteers and lifelong learning

During my time in Zqb I not only learned about Polish and Ukrainian culture, but about my family and myself as well. I learned that my family has an enormous capacity to form friendships. I also learned to take more risks, to deal with

a multitude of personalities and responsibilities, to be flexible, to be more outspoken, the necessity of asking questions, that I am a lifelong learner and that it is okay to make mistakes. My experience with the Teaching English in Poland program in Zqb was

unforgettable and I am very grateful to the Kosciuszko Foundation and OSA ET (Polish Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language – English Teaching) for the opportunity to be a part of such a meaningful cultural exchange.●

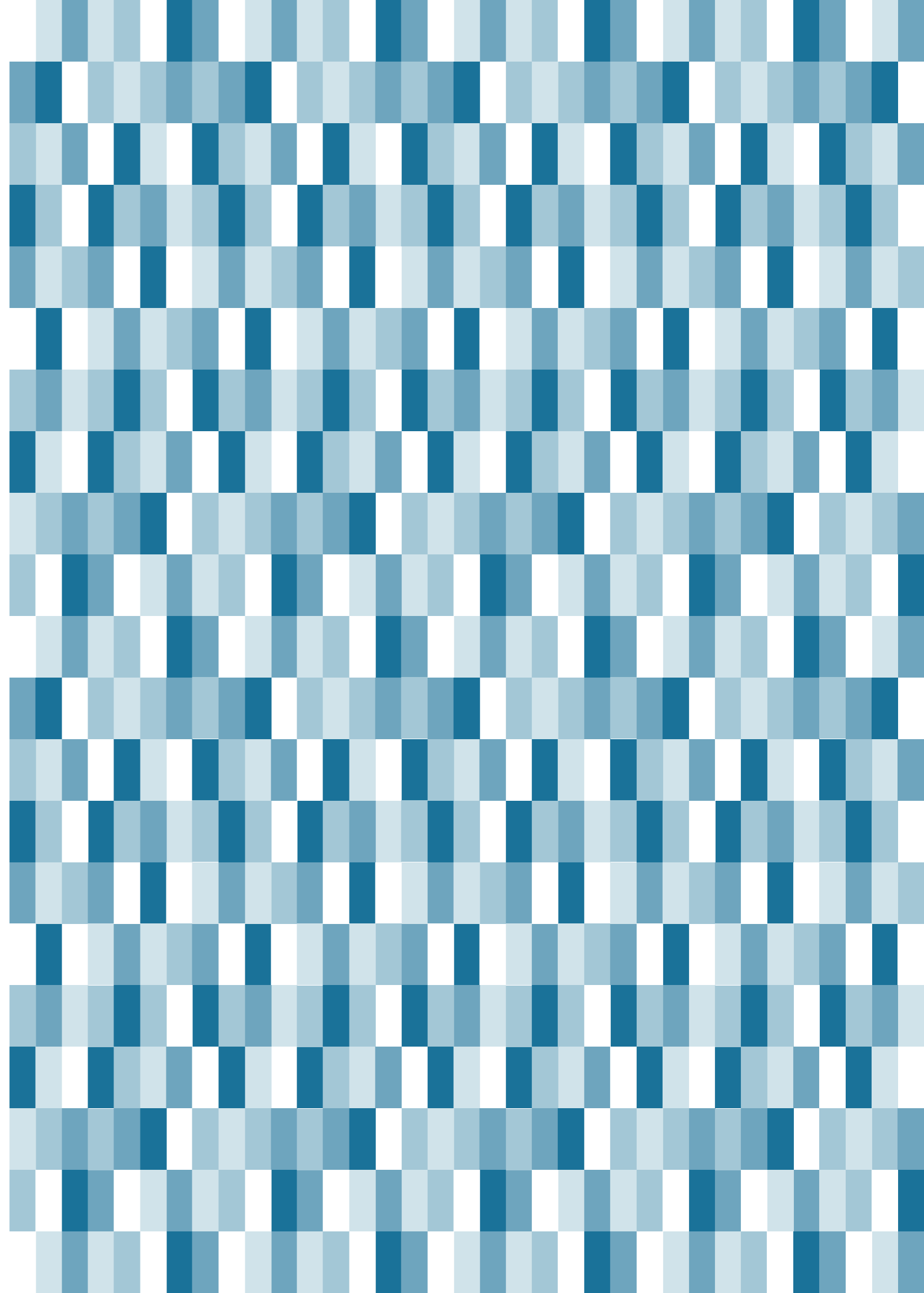
Amelie Czekaj Lives in New York with her husband and two daughters. She is a Spanish teacher with 24 years of experience in the Massapequa Public School District. TEIP has had a profound impact on her and her family. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences of her life both personally and professionally.



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Amelie Czekaj
American staff leader
at the TEIP camp in Ząb



The Kosciuszko Foundation Inc.

The Foundation was established in 1925 in New York. For nearly 100 years of its history, it has been awarding grants to students and researchers in Poland and the United States. It works to popularize and spread knowledge about the history of culture and science in Poland by holding exhibitions, concerts and competitions, as well as promotes Polish art overseas. The Foundation is dedicated to commemorate Thaddeus Kosciuszko, an outstanding general, insurgent, leader and a Polish émigré in America.

The Kosciuszko Foundation Poland

Initiated in 2010, the Foundation has been supporting intellectual, scientific and cultural exchanges between Poland and the United States. It organizes cultural events, participates in organizing scholarship abroad for researchers and artists and hosts American students as well. The Foundation holds competitions and participates in the selection of laureates of The Kosciuszko Foundation awards for exceptional physicians (The Bohdan and Zygmunt Janczewski award) and researchers (FamLab). It makes efforts to cultivate our mutual Polish and American history. Teaching English in Poland is the flagship program of the Foundation.

Find out more:

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