

RLUGs of the World: ZBUDUJMY.TO

By HispaBrick Magazine®

Pictures by ZBUDUJMY.TO



HispaBrick Magazine: Name of the RLUG?

Zbudujmy.to (which means: Let's build it)

HBM: Country?

Z.t: Poland

HBM: When did your RLUG get started?

Z.t: We started about four years ago, and we are currently working on our 4th anniversary event. A lot has happened during those years, and we have put a lot of bricks together.

HBM: How did it get started?

Z.t: Most of our members used to be in LUGPol and were pretty active there. We had different views on how a LUG should be run than the LUGPol owners, and because we were not able to make changes there to satisfy us, we let go of LUGPol and created Zbudujmy.to. Now we run things our own way, though not without some mistakes. Not everything is just roses, but we have had some successes—let's talk about those later.



HBM: How many members does it have?

Z.t: We oscillate around 50 associated members, paying a yearly fee and having full access to benefits and responsibilities, and then we have over 600 forum members on top of that.

HBM: Are there any other LUGs in your country? Do you have contact with them?

Z.t: As mentioned before, other than Zbudujmy.to in Poland there is also LUGPol. There used to be KMFL (Klub Młodych Fanów LEGO® - Club of Young Lego Fans), which was not recognized by LEGO in terms of the LEGO Ambassador Network (LAN), but it seems they have all already matured and

either grown out of playing with bricks, or have joined one of the other Polish LUGs.

There are some members that have dual membership, so there is some communication and cooperation, but there are also some members on both sides who still feel the grudge. We try to cooperate as much as possible when working with LEGO Poland but that still generates some tensions. I hope this will ease out with time, but that's not happening just yet.

There is also Sariel.pl (Paweł Kmieć)—a recognized online community.

HBM: Do you organize events or exhibitions?

Z.t: Of course we do. We used to organize many events in cooperation with local museums which would last for about 2 months. These usually consisted of an opening weekend when people could meet with us, play with interactive models, and have fun with bricks; and then for the rest of the event there was just an exhibition. Usually there were well over 10,000 visitors.

Recently we are moving a bit into the format that TLG prefers, which is weekend events. Those are usually smaller, but also easier to run and organize.

We also attend occasionally to some other events like Fan Weekend or LEGOWorld; maybe not as often as I would like, but some of us want to connect more with AFOLs around the world.

HBM: Do you have contact with TLG (The LEGO® Group)?

Z.t: As with every registered LUG, we have contact with TLG through the LAN, where we are vocal and have had some contribution since it was created in its current form.

We also have good contact with LEGO Poland. It is a perfect example of what cooperation with TLG and RLUGs could look like. They are very supportive, they help us organize events, and lend us play-tables and huge built figures to make our events more interesting for kids. In exchange we take part in different projects together. This year we have been building some Polish landmarks, so they can exhibit them during their shows.



We also prepared a big 3D map of Poland which was built by the public during an event accompanying the opening of the first Polish LEGO® Store (licensed, not LBR). We also built some landmarks to be placed on the map among kids' built models.



HBM: How easy is it to be a LEGO fan in your country? Do you have any advantages or difficulties?

Z:t: It is not easy, as average salaries are lower than in the west, and the bricks cost us the same or even more. It is not as bad as in some other countries of the ex eastern block, and the gap between us and the west is slowly closing.

We often were complaining about not having an official LEGO Store, but this year we got one in our capital, Warsaw. That is a licensed shop, so VIP cards are not available, but at least we have our own Pick a Brick wall. That of course is still far from having it in most bigger cities, but at least we cannot complain about it anymore.

Being an AFOL used to be perceived as something strange, but that's changing slowly.

Our biggest assets and advantages are our great and extremely creative builders: Jarek Książczyk (Jerac—Chimera, WH40K), Michał Kaźmierczak (Migalart—Erebor, Mustafar), Paweł Michalak (KrisKelvin—Western City modular, castles), the extremely productive Bartłomiej Huetter (BHs), and Paweł Ostromecki (Zgredek—DiscWorld MOCs and minifigs) just to name a few. Paweł Kmiec (Sariel) is also a forum member but is not associated. Many of us have grown up under communism, where there was a lack of everything, and that has made us skillful in making up for what we lack and doing things with what we have.

We also have some dedicated collectors, like Waldek Jeziorski (Amal), who not only has all the Classic Space sets, but also all the alternative versions built.



HBM: Do you have any interesting anecdotes related to your LUG?

Z:t: Yes, here are some:

- Our name Zbudujmy.to is also our website adress. It took some effort to get the .to domain, but it also creates a lot of confusion. People often type Zbudujmy.to.pl or Zbudujmyto.pl and cannot find us. But unfortunately we cannot secure those domains.
- Once a Ban Bao sales representative contacted us and wanted to advertise here...
- Probably because many people used to be in LUGPol, we are sometimes confused with them. It is sometimes annoying, and sometimes funny, for example when we get contacted by mistake about a secret project of the other RLUG.

- There is a Polish-language blog by one of our ex members: <https://8studs.wordpress.com/>
- One of our members also has a blog in English: crazybricks.com
- When we were preparing an exhibition in Chorzów last year, the lights went out, and we had to assemble MOCs using our smartphones as flashlights.
- Sometimes when we exhibit at the other end of Poland, not everybody comes in person and some people just send their models. Fragile models can break apart during transport and we try to rebuild them as best as we can, but without the original builder at hand what we produce can sometimes be quite different from the original MOC :)
- We were invited to exhibit at the newly opening "I love Baltic" museum in 2014. So the museum was still being built while we were preparing the exhibition. We had our version ready and built before the actual museum was completed.

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