

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
New Worlds - Innovative Space Education and Outreach (7)

Author: Ms. TEJAL THAKORE

Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC), Germany, t.thakore@gmail.com

Mr. Alexander Karl

Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC), Germany, alexanderkarl@hotmail.com

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC OUTREACH ON PLANETARY DEFENCE

Abstract

Planetary Defense has received increased attention over the recent years. The potential threat that Near Earth Objects (NEOs) pose to human civilization where more than half of the population is under the age of 35, makes it an issue that concerns the youth. Education and awareness are vital for the public to understand the threat and how to mitigate or even avoid it. The NEO Working Group of the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC) is dedicated to helping the worldwide planetary defense community to meet one of nature's greatest challenges. The group provides a youth perspective to planetary defense through annual reports, competitions, conference attendance, and public outreach projects related to Near Earth Objects. Since 2008, the NEO Working Group organizes an annual competition called Move An Asteroid Technical Paper Competition which calls for students and young professionals to submit technical papers describing an innovative idea on one or more key aspects of planetary defense. Previous winners have presented at the Space Generation Congress (SGC) and the International Astronautical Congress (IAC). In 2009, the NEO Working Group created and published a documentary on NEOs and planetary defense which has now had more than 23,000 views on YouTube. In May 2011, the NEO Working Group organized a well received and successful public outreach event in Bucharest, Romania inviting planetary defense experts such as astronauts Rusty Schweickart and Dr. Dimitru D. Prunariu. . This paper outlines the previous activities of SGAC's NEO Working Group and highlights some lessons learned that could be useful for other outreach activities. A brief outlook on upcoming projects that aim to increase public and especially youth interest in planetary defense and NEOs is concluding the paper.