

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)

Poster Session (P)

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THE STATUS OF SPACE SCIENCE OUTREACH AND AWARENESS IN SOUTH AFRICA: A
CLOSER LOOK AT THE SPACE SCIENCE OPEN DAY

Abstract

The Space Science Outreach and Awareness Programme was developed by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) with the aim to develop and implement public engagement activities that effectively contribute to a stimulated and engaged South African society around space science and related applications. This also done in order to support the development of a critical mass of globally competitive human resources in prioritised areas. This programme is situated in the Science Communication Unit at the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA). SAASTA's involvement in Space Science Education, Outreach and Awareness dates back to 2003 when World Space Week (WSW) was implemented. Since 2011 SAASTA has coordinated various Space Science Outreach and awareness activities in different provinces across the country and these were in the form of exhibitions, public lectures, media round tables and hands on activities. The programme is also aimed at stimulating meaningful public debate around space science and getting industry involved. On this paper I will look at the impact of the Space Science Open Day which is an annual event that has taken place in five out of nine provinces in the country. This event is aimed at developing a space science workforce and making the South African citizens aware of opportunities and the role played by South Africa globally.