

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)

Living In Space - Education And Outreach In Space Life Sciences and infrastructure development for capacity building (7.-A1.8)

Author: Dr. Chiaki Mukai
Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), Japan

THE IMPORTANCE OF REACHING OUT TO SOCIETY:
EDUCATION ENABLES US TO ENVISION AND PURSUE OUR DREAMS

Abstract

It has been 50 years since Yuri Gagarin, became the first human being to orbit the earth, and safely return to report about our "blue planet". This great achievement has opened for human beings a new frontier to explore. Since then, the epoch-making events in space history have inspired our spirit to discover new knowledge. A great example of this is the International Space Station where we have a state-of-the-art laboratory to conduct various kinds of research. Space research has already expanded scientific knowledge across a broad scope of disciplines from materials processing to human physiology, from earth resources observations to biotechnical research, and more. I believe that manned space programs contribute to the development of science and technology for the benefit of all mankind improving the quality of our lives and making us more productive. Space exploration also gives us awareness that this small planet is the only place for humans to live. Through this awareness we strongly believe that we need to cooperate with each other and to share as well as to protect our precious earth for the sake of our children's future.

The purpose of this presentation is to emphasize the importance of educational programs which can take an active role in reaching out to society and bridge the gap between space research and people on the ground. Method and Result: Some educational programs, both in space and on earth, have been introduced and they have been proven to be long-lasting, motivative and interactive. For example: in 1994, the 2nd generation of space-flown fish were distributed to 304 schools in Japan where children excitedly learned about the life cycle and habits of fish as well as the importance of environmental issues. This excitement has carried over year after year until now, the 18th generation of space-flown fish. Conclusion: Educational programs are like planting the seeds of curiosity in the minds of the people, in order to reap dividends in the future. We strongly believe that we need to promote the education of our young people by teaching them the importance of dream, of science and technology, of teamwork and of being a more conscious member of our international society here on this, our planet earth. Education enables us to envision and pursue our dreams.