

65th International Astronautical Congress 2014

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Calling Planet Earth - Space Outreach to the General Public (6)

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BOLIVIA, CHALLENGES OF A NEW SPACE COMMUNITY

Abstract

The Bolivian Space Agency has launched its first communications satellite in December, 2013, this event has marked the beginning of a new technological era for the country, since for the first time it will be in charge of the operation of an own spacecraft. For the operation of this satellite the Bolivian Space Agency had selected a group of 64 professionals to be trained the first group of Bolivians with space technologies background. During the first years of operation, the priority for the agency is the rural areas services implementation and the administration of the bandwidth resources available and the planning for next projects.

But the vision of a Space Agency should go beyond, towards having a national space program in long term, creating R&D opportunities, informing the general public, engaging students and professionals and in the future creating academic and industry opportunities in space technologies. The new space community have this challenge in their hands.

This paper presents the first steps of the community ,its activities, the impact, lessons learned, and the planned activities for near future.

The launching event of the TKSAT satellite has sparked a curiosity in general public about Space, but with time, after the event, this curiosity fades. The organization of the first Space Congress in Bolivia, has as goal to keep this curiosity eager, to create an opportunity for those who were interested to learn more and to engage them into activities and invite them to become part of this community. The event was targeted to students and professionals with various topics and speakers, the impact of this activity will be presented.

A native nanosatellite project, which is part of a program proposal, has as goal to engage university students and professionals in a hands on space project that it is planned to be launched in 3 years, several approaches to find funding with national government is being done, meanwhile the project has started with universities agreements and private stakeholders.

The World Space Week has had presence in our country lead by an astronomy organization, it is planned is to make the audience larger, by adding activities in more institutions and in other cities.

It will also present the status of the proposal of an organizational modification of the Bolivian Space Agency and the creation of an R&D department targeted to encourage government to create politics that creates opportunities to do research in technology fields.