

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

Author: Ms. Bethany Downer
Leiden University, Canada, downer@mail.strw.leidenuniv.nl

EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR UNDERSERVED MINORITIES AND RURAL
REGIONS: A CASE STUDY IN NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA

Abstract

The space industry is becoming increasingly connected across borders and disciplines. With this increased reach, it is of integral importance that those who reside in regions with little to no direct space connections are also made aware of opportunities to become involved in space industry activities. The effective outreach of current space activities should include the proper communication of opportunities to engage with the space sector, which also requires the development of novel and innovative means of outreach for non-traditional target groups.

This paper focuses on the outreach and engagement of underserved minorities, including those residing in rural regions and native communities. The author first provides a historical review of the general public's relationship with the space industry's findings and advancements, including both understanding and interest, which is then compared to the current state of public engagement and the apparent gap in involvement from those of remote and rural regions. A discussion and comparative evaluation is provided by the author on the engagement and outreach activities conducted to approximately 9,000 students residing in native communities and rural areas in Newfoundland and Labrador in eastern Canada throughout 2018 and 2019. Although a province in a developed country, the island of Newfoundland currently offers minimal direct connections to the space sector and thus many of the province's youth assume involvement with space activities is not feasible. This case study aims to provide insights on inclusive and innovative means of engagement for students of rural and native communities as well as broader non-traditional target group outreach. These discussions deliver a series of recommendations for the future of effective regional strategy development of space industry activities for non-traditional target groups.