

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
On Track - Undergraduate Space Education (3)

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1000 FUTURE MEXICAN SCIENTISTS: MOTIVATIONS FOR SPACE PROJECTS, PERSPECTIVE,
AND GOALS.

Abstract

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) needs to be promoted and there has been a lot of talk about it. An attempt has been made to share science and it is intended that more young people participate in the space field. However, what happens after they get into college? What is the big step young people who decide to study STEM take to become recognized scientists or engineers? What motivates them? What is their perspective on science?

Of 125 million Mexicans, there are 12,576,736 who are between 18 and 23 years old, however only 4,705,400 study at the higher level, and only 3 % of that number study a scientific career. I am a Physics student at the UNAM Faculty of Sciences and I conducted a survey of 500 Mexican students from various careers such as: Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Aerospace Engineering, Physics, Biomedical Physics, Earth Sciences... and I found very interesting results .

Asking students interested in the space sector, what prevents them from achieving their objectives? I found dozens of testimonies from mexican students who dreamed of being astronauts, but they see it as an unattainable dream. 50% feel unmotivated when they think about their future job and 80% want to leave Latin America, to pursue their dreams in countries like Germany, United States and Russia.

Although it was a survey in Mexico, we can expect less enthusiastic data in other countries less spatial development. The few young people who want to dedicate themselves to the space sector are not sure of their field of work. What data will we obtain from a survey of this type in Latin America? In developed countries, do half of STEM students also feel unmotivated?

In addition to motivating young people to enter the wonders of the cosmos, we must encourage them not to give up and follow their dreams. We propose mentoring programs, free resources, job offers, scholarships and support to avoid school dropouts. This message is not only for the Academy in Mexico, it is also directed to the entire world, where the education and motivation of young people is the future of humanity.