

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

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INSPIRE AFRICA: SPACE EDUCATION THROUGH ADVOCACY.

**Abstract**

**ABSTRACT**

**KEYWORDS:** Space, Advocacy, Education, Africa, Public.

**INTRODUCTION** Undoubtedly, space technology has improved the quality of living in Africa by proffering solutions to diverse socio-economic challenges across sectors. To advance its impact on the continent, the African Space policy provides that space education is one of the ways to leapfrog technological development in the continent. The policy states as follows; “Africa should develop and adopt essential space education programmes and tools needed to build its capacity and thus maintain the widespread use of space technologies for its development”. The author posits that constructive advocacy is one of the essential tools needed to build space capacity in the continent. Broadly, advocacy is employed to initiate public awareness on a subject matter. It creates the consciousness required for positive societal attention for a cause. Space advocacy in a nutshell encompasses the public support of space research, exploration and use. Ideally, members of the public need to appreciate and support the space program of their countries and encourage the same to thrive. However, in Africa, there is paucity of support for space programs because its relevance is hardly understood. Take Nigeria for instance, a recent trend on social media reveals that many Nigerians are unaware of the existence of the Nigerian Space agency and believes that the funds for the countries space program should be utilized for other seemingly pressing projects. With the emerging private sector in the continent, it is expedient to analyse the best approach to space discussions. This Paper is delineated to discuss the strategies in which advocacy can be utilised effectively to promote space education in Africa, particularly how space advocates can contribute to enlightening the general public on the relevance space technology and its necessity in the continent. The paper will investigate the previous and current efforts of the Learn Space Foundation, Spacehubs Africa and the Space Generation Advisory Council in advancing space education through Advocacy and their impact on the continent. It will further highlight pragmatic steps that can be taken by professionals of different disciplines in Africa to increase positive public understanding of space exploration within the African narrative. In the light of the New Space economy, the author proffers an open socio-cultural means through which different experts, young people and students can contribute to indigenous capacity building in space for the overall desired development of the continent.