

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Interactive Presentations - IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (IP)

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EDUCATION AND OUTREACH AT SHARJAH OPTICAL OBSERVATORY

Abstract

The interest of the United Arab Emirates in the astronomy and space sciences sector and the inclusion of this field in the national priorities reflected positively on the education at its various levels. This was manifested in the establishment of several specialized centers in the country. In this article, we focus on the role of Sharjah Optical Observatory (SOO) at the Sharjah Academy for Astronomy, Space Science and Technology (SAASST), which is an institute at the University of Sharjah, in employing its scientific and technical competencies in serving the education and outreach of astronomy and space sciences. We also led light on the role of the observatory in igniting several outreach projects and training courses. Since its establishment in 2015, SOO has taken upon itself to serve the community and the educational sector in the country and the region. In cooperation with other SAASST's departments like the planetarium and outreach, the academic affairs and the space sciences, the observatory succeeded in covering all astronomical event like eclipses, occultations, solar activities, ... etc. Since the first day of its establishment, SAASST and SOO were put in continuous cooperation with the Ministry of Education, and organized several workshops dedicated to both; the teachers to hone their skills to teach the related sciences and the students to train them on using astronomical instruments and to participate in astronomical observations. The Department of Academic Affairs at SAASST launched several specialized professional diplomas in cooperation with the Center for Continuing Education and Professional Development, some of which were allocated for interested engineers and scientists, while others for the talented school students in cooperation with the Sharjah Education Council. This is in addition to the continuous astronomical camps which aim to train armatures, students, and teachers in a practical way. As a result of all this over the past eight years, the number of young people interested in these sciences has increased, and the number of students enrolled in the physics and aerospace engineering departments in universities increased, and several programs at the graduate level were launched in these disciplines in state universities.