

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Space Education Outreach and Workforce Development for Emerging Communities (10-E11.2)

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BRINGING SPACE CLOSER TO HOME : CREATING NEW OUTREACH STRATEGIES FOR
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND ENHANCED ACCESSIBILITY IN THE ASIA PACIFIC
REGION

Abstract

The Asia Pacific (AP) region has shown tremendous growth within the space industry since the start of the millennium. National Moon landing missions such as China's Chang'e 3 through 5, India's Chandrayaan 3, and Japan's SLIM have showcased the AP region's growing technological and scientific capabilities. These build on prior orbiter missions by the three countries, each of which have also provided new mapping data to better understand our Moon and plan more landing missions. While these achievements constitute several milestones in robotic lunar and planetary exploration as well as demonstrate reliability of space technologies, the general population in the region remain largely unaware of such missions and their purpose. The lack of awareness boils down to communication and outreach strategies implemented by the AP region Space Agencies (or organizations) which fail to effectively communicate information or reach out to a diverse audience. Another negative aspect that is born out of inadequate and ineffective information dissemination is 'fake news'. Hence, in this paper, we critically analyze the existing framework of outreach and communication strategies executed by various AP space agencies (or organizations) to bring out loopholes. Building on that, we provide new outreach strategies to increase engagement and effectively communicate to a diverse (and inclusive) audience. One such strategy is called 'Science communication and Hands-on Activities to Kickstart Educational development' or S.H.A.K.E in short. S.H.A.K.E will address and recognize space agencies as sole and credible sources of information and will focus on building a "brand" out of these institutions. This brand building will not be carried out by the institutions itself but by official partnerships with national/ regional media agencies, educational institutions, NGOs and influential figures in the entertainment industry. Such 'knowledge partners' will amplify the reach while drowning out misinformation. At the same time, they will have some range and independence in their communications to effectively cater to the diverse cultures, languages and interests of the AP population. Therefore, S.H.A.K.E and other outreach strategies proposed in the paper will ensure that the quantitative and qualitative aspects of outreach are achieved while maintaining the technical aspect of the information provided by space agencies and organizations of the AP region. The paper devises approaches that will essentially make space accessible to all by encouraging capacity building initiatives within the region.