

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Calling Planet Earth: Large Engagement and Communications Initiatives (6)

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PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDES TOWARD SPACE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN AN
EMERGING SPACE COUNTRY

Abstract

In emerging space nations, public perception often grapples with skepticism and prioritization concerns, with many questioning the allocation of resources to space exploration over pressing domestic issues. In addition, effective outreach programs and activities play a pivotal role in overcoming these challenges, fostering greater understanding and appreciation of the importance of space science and technology among the public. Therefore, this study delves into the evolving public perception and attitudes toward space science and technology in Bahrain, particularly in the context of the Bahrain's National Space Science Agency (NSSA)'s efforts to elevate the country's profile in the space sector. Moreover, it will address how NSSA's framework and initiatives have been instrumental in facing these challenges and shifting public perception towards a more positive outlook on space science and technology. Initially met with surprise and skepticism, many Bahrainis questioned the prioritization of space exploration over other pressing issues such as housing and infrastructure. However, through NSSA's extensive outreach and educational initiatives over a decade, coupled with the success of Light-1, Bahrain's first joint satellite project with the UAE, a significant shift in public sentiment has been observed. The research employs surveys, interviews, and focus group sessions to gauge the spectrum of perceptions among Bahrain's diverse population, revealing a dramatic increase in space sector acceptance from almost non-existent to over 50