Paper ID: 91157
student

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

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EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF APSCO PROJECTS IN EXPANDING ACCESS TO QUALITY SPACE EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION: AN ANALYSIS USING THE OECD DAC CRITERIA

Abstract

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations, prioritizes quality education (SDG 4) as a cornerstone for achieving critical goals worldwide. International development cooperation plays a vital role in supporting education initiatives and fostering capacity building in developing countries. Collaborative projects between international organizations, governments, and civil society are crucial for maximizing the impact of these goals. The landscape of international development projects, particularly those focused on education and capacity building, is undergoing a dynamic transformation, driven by the need to address persistent challenges and maximize impact in a rapidly changing world. International organizations are increasingly working hand-in-hand with diverse stakeholders for equipping individuals and communities with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive sustainable development. In this regard, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) plays a central role addressing international cooperation in space activities. Recently, UNOOSA released the "Space 2030" Agenda, a global strategy aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals including the enhancement of capacity-building, education and training in space science and applications, in particular for developing countries as one of its overarching objectives. International Cooperation development in the Asia-Pacific region is led by the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO). APSCO provides a cooperative mechanism and promotes multilateral cooperation to facilitate capacity building, resource sharing and space education of its member states, including Bangladesh, China, Iran, Mongolia, Pakistan, Peru, Thailand, and Türkiye. Despite resource allocation and implemented interventions, APSCO stakeholders still face a knowledge gap concerning the dynamics, trends, and methodology required, within an international cooperation framework, for identifying the factors of shared success of its projects, and systematizing conclusions and recommendations into valuable insights. Project evaluation is one of the key operations in development cooperation success. This study will apply a mixed methodology based in the OECD DAC criteria for the Ex-Post Evaluation of International Cooperation Projects implemented by the APSCO in the last five years, specifically in the Education and Capacity Building category, in order to the analyze its effectiveness in developing a sustainable ecosystem for Space Technologies and Applications (STA) education and capacity building in the Asia Pacific region. The findings of this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the current relevance of APSCO in expanding access to space education environments within its member states to foster a thriving space education ecosystem in the region.