

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Space for All: Decolonial Practices in Space (2)

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”BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE ASTRONOMY COMMUNITY: INSIGHTS FROM THE NILAM MEETING (NATIONAL ASTRONOMICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF THAILAND AND INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMICAL UNION LGBTQ FOR ASTRONOMY MEETING)”

Abstract

The successful NILAM meeting, co-organized by the International Astronomical Union (IAU), National Astronomical Research Institute of Thailand (NARIT), IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO), and the IAU Working Group on LGBTQ, in collaboration with NARIT and ITCA, marked a significant milestone in fostering inclusivity within the astronomy community. Themed ”Building an Inclusive Astronomy Community: An LGBTQIA+ Meeting,” the event provided a vital platform for LGBTQIA+ astronomers to convene, exchange insights, and explore avenues for enhancing inclusivity within the field.

The 1st LGBTQ event for IAU and NARIT has 2 main objectives. First it aims to provide a safe and supportive environment for LGBTQIA+ astronomers to connect, share their experiences, and foster a sense of community. Many LGBTQIA+ individuals face discrimination and marginalisation in academic and professional settings, and creating a safe space allows them to navigate their careers more comfortably.

Secondly, NILAM would like to identify the practical and safe steps that can be taken to enhance inclusivity and visibility for LGBTQIA+ astronomers within the broader astronomical community. By addressing systemic barriers and biases, the meeting promotes diversity and representation at all levels of academia and research. Through workshops, panel discussions, and collaborative initiatives, participants explore strategies for fostering a more inclusive culture within academic institutions, professional organizations, and research collaborations.

One of the key aspects of NILAM is its diverse lineup of speakers. By featuring LGBTQ professionals, activists, and astronomers, the symposium showcases the rich diversity within the community and highlights the contributions of LGBTQ individuals to the field of astronomy. The symposium serves as a platform for LGBTQIA+ astronomers to advocate for policy changes, raise awareness about issues affecting their community, and champion initiatives that promote equity and diversity.

In summary, NILAM represents a crucial step towards building a more inclusive and equitable astronomical community. By providing a safe space for LGBTQIA+ astronomers to connect, collaborate, and advocate for change, the symposium embodies the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the pursuit of scientific excellence.