

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Space Education and Outreach (8)

Author: Ms. Lumka Msibi
University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

SPACE AND THE AFRICAN SOCIETY

Abstract

The objective of this study is to gain an understanding of the gap between space and society in Africa and to bridge the gap through history, education and governments. Space is a complicated high technological development area. Many technologies such as Global Positioning System (GPS) and weather forecasting rely on space technologies. The African society can benefit immensely from the space industry. Africa needs development, access, medication and improved low level skills so as to combat the social issues and meet the basic needs of all Africans, this can be done through the space industry. South Africa, a developing country has a history in space activities which in the past focused mainly on military affairs. Later in history we then built our first micro-satellite, the sunsat, this was then followed by the SumbandilaSat. Last year on the 9th of December 2010 South African launched its space agency, the South African National Space Agency (SANSA). With all these new developments in the space industry we can use highly intellectual Africans such as university graduates to design and build satellites and space stations to place around the African continent and to launch space vehicles. By doing so the satellite data will give governments, non-government organisations and funds the ability to manage and improve society by improving the lives of farmers, workers, small villages, humanitarian aid, communication and military data. The involvement of Africa in the space sector is very important to society as it will facilitate the management of resources, crops, forestry, water and people. This will also better our response to environmental threats. Initiatives that result from the growth of the space sector in Africa will assist in job creation as jobs will be created in the space related fields as well as other fields with relation to the management of the space stations and the manufacturing of devices. There are enormous opportunities that arise from the space sector that will aid society- we need to be smart about our continent.