

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Calling Planet Earth - Space Outreach To The General Public (4)

Author: Ms. Ayami Kojima
Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), Japan

EFFECTIVE SPACE OUTREACH CONTRIBUTES TO SUSTAINABLE SPACE DEVELOPMENT

Abstract

It is obvious that space outreach is very important in space development. As the cost of space development is very high, and if it is done by country, a large amount of taxes will be invested. Therefore space development won't be able to sustain without understanding of the general public. Japan also relies on taxes for that field. Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (thereafter called "JAXA"), where responsible for space development in Japan, regards it is their duty to explain purposes, process and results of research and development to the general public.

JAXA has been conducting various promotional and enlightening activities such as Open-House events, lectures to promote understanding, exhibition hall at several space centers and reporting conditions of satellites via "Twitter". Tsukuba Space Center, the biggest space center in Japan, holds Open-House events twice a year. They introduce their various activities and achievements with lots of events such as a lecture by Astronaut or Project Managers, a plastic bottle rocket class, a space experiment show, GPS treasure-hunting and Experience of rocket launching sound etc. Around 10,000 people visit Tsukuba Space Center on that day from all over Japan. The Open-House event gives opportunity for visitors to ask questions directly to researchers or even to Astronaut. That helps to close the gap between JAXA and the general public.

However, it has been clarified that about 40% of visitors are repeat visitors by studying questionnaire survey from visitors of the Open-House event. It can be interpreted that the Open-House event was attractive for repeat visitors but in the other hand, JAXA has to make more efforts to expand group of visitors who are not interested in space development yet. And the result of survey also clarified fluctuations in the number of visitors for each Open-House event were affected by big events such as "HAYABUSA returns", Rocket launching and Astronaut mission began at International Space Station. From that result, it can be estimated that the media has great influence to the general public.

My suggestion is to collaborate with media actively in order to draw the general public who are not interested in space development. Not only media but also to cooperate with space agencies or space related companies in overseas and to hold worldwide events with them attracts people's eyes. I believe that Japan needs to be more aggressive for effective space outreach and it contributes for sustainable space development.