

Global Astronomy Survey : Namibia

First Submission: Riaan Steenkamp [see human resources section] 23 February 2009

## **1. Professional (Research) Astronomy:**

(i) Number of universities offering Astronomy (and their names)

None up to 2009. The University of Namibia will introduce a half-module of Astrophysics for the first time in 2010.

(ii) Number of universities offering Physics (and their names)

One only. University of Namibia.

(iii) Number of academics who have been trained in Astronomy (ideally with their names and levels of qualification)

Dr Riaan Steenkamp, Ph.D. (Cosmic Ray/Space Physics) -- not actual Astronomy  
Mr Isak D. Davids, M.Sc. (Gamma Ray Astrophysics), enrolled for Ph.D.

(iv) Number of astronomical facilities (observatories, telescopes, etc) and as much detail about each as possible (websites/contact details)

H.E.S.S. - High Energy Stereoscopic System  
<http://www.mpi-hd.mpg.de/hfm/HESS/HESS.shtml>  
Prof. Werner Hofmann - [Werner.Hofmann@mpi-hd.mpg.de](mailto:Werner.Hofmann@mpi-hd.mpg.de)  
Dr Michael Punch - [punch@cdf.in2p3.fr](mailto:punch@cdf.in2p3.fr)

(v) Self evaluation (according to the different phases above, how would you rate your country in terms of Professional Astronomy? Please include any other relevant information to motivate your choice.)

Phase 3

## **2. Public Understanding of Astronomy:**

(i) What governmental astronomy/science outreach programmes for the public take place (co-ordinated either by government departments or national facilities)

Namibian Science Week (annual happening)

(ii) What non-governmental astronomy/science outreach programmes for the public take place (NGO activities or international programmes that your country is involved in)

Some Namibian Scientific Society meetings

(iii) Comment on the presence of astronomy in the media (TV, radio, newspapers). Is it very prominent? Are there specific programmes on astronomy? Is the media generally willing to publish news on astronomy?

Very little presence at all. One has to almost beg them to cover an event that make headlines in other countries.

(iv) Comment on the presence of astronomy/science in the general culture of the people. Are there any specific challenges or setbacks? Is astronomy a welcome subject of conversation?

Very little in the general culture. What little there is is among the part of the population that is of European descent as well as the few Academics at the University of Namibia and the Polytechnic of Namibia.

(v) Self evaluation (according to the different phases above, how would you rate your country in terms of Public Understanding of Astronomy? Please include any other relevant information to motivate your choice.)

Phase 4

### **3. Astronomy in Schools:**

(i) What governmental astronomy/science education and outreach programmes for schools take place (co-ordinated either by government departments or national facilities)

Except for the Namibian Science week, none to my knowledge

(ii) What non-governmental astronomy/science education and outreach programmes for schools take place (NGO activities or international

programmes that your country is involved in)

Very little indeed. Some activities are undertaken by European sponsored organisations like e.g. the Franco-Namibian cultural centre.

(iii) Comment on the presence of astronomy in the school curriculum. Is it part of the school curriculum? Is it very prominent? What age groups?

None at all

(iv) Comment on the status of astronomy/science in schools. Are there any specific challenges or setbacks? Sufficient number of students studying maths and science? General interest in maths/science/astronomy in schools?

The biggest setback is the low standard of Mathematics and a general disinterest among mostly African children in any type of Science. Mostly in favour of sports of some kind.

(v) Self evaluation (according to the different phases above, how would you rate your country in terms of Astronomy in Schools? Please include any other relevant information to motivate your choice.)

Phase 4