Global Astronomy Survey: Nigeria

First Submission: Bonaventure Okere [see human resources section] 28 March 2008
SPoC Approved : Yes

1. Professional (Research) Astronomy:

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

There are 6 Universities offering Astronomy proper and most other Universities offer Atmospheric Sciences.
1. University of Nigeria Nsukka, UNN
2. Abia State University, Uturu.
3. Federal University of Science and Technology, Owerri.
4. Nnamdi Azikiwe University of Science and Technology, Awka
5. Ebonyi State University, Abakiliki.
6. Rivers State University of Science and Technology, PortHarcourt is equally doing Astronomy courses. This makes it six Universities in Nigeria.

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

Over 30 Universities are offering Physics

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

The number of Academics who have been trained in Astronomy include the underlisted, I may have missed some out.
Prof. S.E. Okoye (PhD)
Prof. P.N.Okeke (PhD)
Prof. G. Anene (PhD)
Prof. C. Akujor (PhD)
Prof. A.A. Ubachukwu (PhD)
Prof. (Mrs) F.N.Okeke (PhD)
Dr. J. Urama (PhD)
Dr. M. Anyakoha (PhD)
Dr A.E. Chukwude (PhD)
Dr R.N.C. Eze (PhD).
Dr. Tunde Rabiu (PhD)

Dr. Mrs J.Ogwo (PhD)
Dr Ugwuanyi (PhD)
E.A. Umahi (MSc)
B.I. Okere (MSc)
J. Alhassan (MSc)
Agbo (MSc)
C.N.Ofodum (MSc)
F. Chizea (MSc)
J.C. Ezeugo (MSc)
F.C. Odo (MSc)
J.A. Obu (MSc)

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

The only optical observatory to house our 25cm optical telescope is nearing completion while negotiations are going on for the construction of a 25m radio telescope.

(v) Self evaluation (according to the different phases above, how would you rate your country in terms of Professional Astronomy?

I think Nigeria could be classified as a "Phase 2" country. We have an established astronomy community with links with the IAU and our rates of publications are relatively high. But we will need help in setting up observationafacilities.

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)

The Nigeria Centre for Basic Space Science (CBSS) run popularization programmes. We have one Planetarium located at (CBSS) University of Nigeria Nsukka.

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

NONE

(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?

A national daily has a weekly column dedicated to astronomy. The Media is generally very willing to run stories related to astronomy whenever they are informed, especially with interesting discoveries or big events. For instance, the recent landing of a meteorite in the North West State of Sokoto was well highlighted by the media.

(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?

Astronomy is mostly discussed among the astronomy community. It is not often discussed outside this community. Though there is a new awakening to astronomy discussion. In general, Science is very popular in Nigeria.

(v) Self evaluation (according to the different phases above, how would you rate your country in terms of Public Understanding of Astronomy?

Nigeria can be considered a "Phase 1" country in terms of public engagement in science. However, public understanding of science is still far from satisfactory.

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)

The ministry of science and technology is involved in the organization of the National Science and Technology week and Space week. The Ministry of Education organizes Science quiz competitions.
There are a number of School programmes run by the various institutions such as High Schools, Universities and Research institutes.

(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)

Nigeria is involved in the International Young Physicists quiz competition organized by the Nigeria – Turkey Friendship.

(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?

We have introduced the following elements of Astronomy in the University Curriculum;

* Introduction to Space Science
* Introduction to Astronomy
* Introduction to Solid Earth Geophysics

(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?

Although there is great interest in Maths and Science in our schools but we still have shortage of good Maths and Science teachers. This shortage may be attributed to brain drain.

(v) Self evaluation (according to the different phases above, how would you rate your country in terms of Astronomy in Schools?

With Astronomy well established in the University Curriculum, I think we can classify Nigeria as a “Phase 1” country, though we need to get it established in Primary and Post Primary (High) Schools.

Any other general comments or information that you feel would be useful for this survey?

Nigeria is relatively well established in terms of theoretical astronomy. However, there is much that is yet to be done in order to ensure that it reaches everyone. The focus I believe will have to be in terms of facilities and human resource development. We need to train more people.
In Nigeria we are currently embarking on the construction of a large radio telescope. And we will welcome collaboration with any African Country. Presently we have an MoU with HartRAO and SAAO. Some of our Astronomers were trained in South African observatories.