

Global Astronomy Survey : Syria

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SpoC Approved : Yes

1. Professional (Research) Astronomy:

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

No universities in Syria offers astronomy.

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

We have five public universities in Syria (Damascus, Aleppo, Tishreen, Al-Baath, and Al-Furat universities), all of them offer physics. Besides, we have three private universities that offer physics, including Al-Kalmoon university, Al-Itihad university, and European university.

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

I can not be sure about the answer but the number is so limited (as there is no academic study of astronomy in Syria), but we know that three Syrian academics has studied astronomy abroad and they are working abroad right now. This is all the information that we know about their study:

- Dr. Abdulkader Hamdo: he studied astro-engineering in Canada and he works there currently.

- Dr. Shadia Rifai: she is specialized in Solar Physics and Spectro-physics, and works in the United States.

- Dr. Mustafa Iteki: he studied geo-astronomy in Paris, France, and he works there as well.

There may be other 3 or 4 names, but no more than that.

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

- Observatories: Unfortunately no observatories exist in Syria.

- Planetariums: There are no fixed planetariums in Syria. There are two portable planetariums only, they are owned by amateur societies.

- Telescopes: There are no more than 100 telescopes overall in whole Syria. There are only 4 telescopes of size 6-8 inches and 12 telescopes of size 4-6 inches. All other telescopes are

smaller than that. All telescopes are owned by amateurs.

(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.)

We may be in phase 3 in professional astronomy.

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)

No governmental astronomy programs are previously or currently taking place in Syria.

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

No non-governmental astronomy programs are previously or currently taking place in Syria, rather than the IYA 2009 which may be the first organized program for astronomy in Syria..

(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?

Astronomy is present in the media. Local TV channels broadcast some astronomy programs from time to time, maybe once a month. Radio stations try to keep up with various activities done by amateurs locally by direct broadcast. The media is generally willing to publish news on astronomy, and sometimes we may find news or reports about astronomical events in newspaper.

(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?

This is a very important issue in all developing countries. Most people consider astronomy a helpless field to be interested in. This is because of the low economic state in general. Many consider that this is a kind of luxury or fantasy, and itâ€™s not useful in any terms. People of pretty high cultural levels (eg. University students) may show some interest in astronomy, but even in this case they may not take the subject seriously. Even true amateur astronomers are very few in Syria, may be some 250-300 persons only (population of Syria: about 20 millions). In general astronomy is a welcome subject of conversation, but only as a hobby.

(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 3.

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)

There are no such programs.

(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)

There are no such programs, rather than some projects in the IYA 2009, which aim to introduce astronomy to schools through portable planetariums and presentations.

(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?

Practically, astronomy doesn't exist in the school curriculum. You may find some few pages about the solar system, the four seasons, the moon phases, or the sun in the science

curriculum, but no more than that. The problem is that those who are responsible of the curriculums are not aware of the importance of the presence of astronomy in this area.

(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?

In fact all students should study math and physics till the 9th class, and they are usually interested in these branches. After that the student can choose to continue his studies in scientific fields or in other fields. Astronomy does not stand as a distinct choice itself.

(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.

