Global Astronomy Survey: Uganda

First Submission: Simon Anguma (SpoC) [see human resources section] 25 March 2008

SpoC Approved : Yes

1. Professional (Research) Astronomy:

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

1- Mbarara University of Science and Technology is the only University in Uganda which offers an elaborate astrophysics curriculum from 1st to 3rd year students offering physics as a subject. Many universities in Uganda just offer a small component of astrophysics as part of physics courses.

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

1- Mbarara University of Science and Technology

2- Makerere University

3- Islamic University in Uganda

4- Kampala International University

5- Busitema University

6- Kyamboga University

7- Gulu University

8- Ndejje University

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

1- Edward Jurua Phd Student Astrophysics (University of Free State)

2- Thomas K Baluku PhD Student Space physics University of (Kwazulu Natal)

3- Jonh Bosco Habarulema PhD Student Space physics

4- Bosco Ororu Msc Student Astrophysics

5- Daniel Opolot Msc Student Astrophysics

6- Abedigamba Oyirwoth Honours Student Astrophysics and space science (UCT)

7- Tom Mutabazi Honours Student Astrophysics and space science (UCT)

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

None

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

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)

None

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

There are some isolated personal efforts especially at Nkozi, about 80 km South West of Kampala the capital city of Uganda. This is the point where equator crosses the Kampala Mbarara High way. Flow directions down the sink at both northern and southern hemispheres are demonstrated for both local and international guests. The group also has simple telescopes for non technical observations of night skies.

(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?

At rare occasions the print media bring articles on common astronomical phenomena such eclipses and so on.

(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?

Indigenous concepts of astronomy exist among the different cultures in Uganda. There is a strong interest among University students towards astronomy.

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

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)

None specifically for astronomy. However, the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology has comprehensive programmes for developing and popularizing science and technology in the country.

(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)

None

(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?

Not as an exclusive subject but aspects such as the solar system and lunar and solar eclipses are taught under other subject.

(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?

Not very prominent due to lack of qualified personnel, teaching equipment and operational curriculum.

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

Phase 3

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

I have been teaching astrophysics as a physics course since 2002. Realizing the importance Science offers to a countries economic transformation, the Government through the Uganda National Council for High Education has introduced some elements of astronomy as a physics course for all Universities offering Physics in Uganda.

This is a very important step towards establishing astronomy in the National education system.