

Global Astronomy Survey: Zambia

First Submission: Prosperity C. Simpemba (SPoC) [Isee human resources section] 29 March 2008

SPoC Approved : Yes

1. Professional (Research) Astronomy:

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

None

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

Two:

1: The University of Zambia (Up to PHd level)

2; The Copperbelt University (basic physics)

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

Four- still undergoing training

1: Patric Sibanda (PHd)

2: Hansingo (PHd)-graduate

3: Chigo Ngwira (PhD)

4: Fred Nambala (MSc)

Five with self developed knowledge in astronomy

1: Dr H. Mweene (H.O.D)

2. Dr Rajan (Lecturer)

2. Mr P. Kalebwe (Lecturer)

3. Mr N. Mwiinga (Lecturer)

4. Mr P. C. Simpemba (MSc. student)- graduating

5. Mr D. Musonda (High School Teacher)

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

Two telescopes and one magnetometer (MAGDAS): Physics Department, box 32378, Lusaka 10101, Zambia

Head of Department: habatwamweene@yahoo.com

Copperbelt University is ready to host any equipment that would be available.

(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.)

Falling under Phase 3

This is so because there is no high level research in astronomy but having a very active astronomy and space science community namely

1. Space Generation Zambia Chapter (SGZC)-- contacts: Prosperity C. Simpemba pcsimpemba (at) yahoo (dot) com

<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/sgzc>

2. Astronomers Without Borders: Sub-Saharan Regional Coordinator:

E-mail; pcsimpemba (at) yahoo (dot) com

3. University of Zambia Physics Students Association:

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)

There Physics Department of the University of Zambia usually gives public alerts on matters such as lunar and solar eclipse events

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

The above stated groupings carry out awareness campaigns and are spearheading the reintroduction of space science in schools and tertiary institutions

(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?

There are no specific media programmes on astronomy. However, the media is generally willing to air the programmes if they are provided to them. The media people themselves have very little understanding of astronomy hence the reason for not initiating astronomy programmes on there 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?

Astronomy is extremely welcome. Our people get enjoy the facination that space science unfolds. Generally science is more prevalent in the town dwellers as opposed to rural community. Ancient knowledge of space science can still be traced in people living in rural areas.

(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.)

Public understanding of astronomy in Zambia is rated Phase 3. From 2001 during the solar eclipse, many Zambians became curious about astronomy and began to appreciate its beauty. We have started a lot of public outreach activities and we are receiving excellent response, especially from high school pupils.

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 Government has done nothing in the recent past and before but recently they are showing political will to support the development of science in general and space science in particular.

(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)

This is just beginning. We have lined up awareness campaigns to schools in our 2008 calendar as SGZC

(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?

Astronomy is not prominent in the school curriculum. We are trying to lobby for it.

(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?

Science in schools is generally good. The greatest challenge is the lack of laboratory equipment. As regards to astronomy, the absence of teachers with astronomy training is the biggest drawback. We need to provide basics to these science teachers through workshops and seminars and also in their training programmes.

(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.)

We are in Phase 3: Now there are more university graduate teachers who can easily rise to the challenge and promote astronomy in our schools. The difficulty lies in the slow realisation of education administrators to accept and implement change. Our science/astronomy groupings will do everything possible to make things move in the right direction.

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

We have a Single Point of Contact for IYA. Prosperity C. Simpemba is the IYA 2009 SPoC (pcsimpemba@yahoo.com)

Name of respondent: PROSPERITY C. SIMPEMBA

Position: 1.Regional Coordinator - Astronomers Without Borders for Sub-Saharan Africa

2. IYA 2009 SPoC for Zambia

3. National Point of Contact(Zambia) for SGAC

Other Information: Founder member of Spce Generation Zambia Chapter (SGZC)

Base: The Copperbelt University, School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Department of Physical Sciences, Box 21692, Kitwe,Zambia.

Thank you for your input. This will most be valuable in developing astronomy in each of our countries.