

Leveraging Local Libraries for Astronomy Education: Promoting Scientific Literacy Through Public Outreach Programs in Valenzuela City, Philippines

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Public libraries serve as vital hubs for learning, especially for students. However, in the Philippines, only three percent (3%) of the total number of public libraries mandated by law are operational and accessible to the public, based on the 2018 status report on Philippine Libraries and Librarianship by the National Library of the Philippines (NLP). Moreover, none currently offers astronomy-related activities for the general audience in a monthly basis. This presentation aims to showcase the programs and activities conducted by Valenzuela City League of Astronomy Enthusiasts (V-CLUE) in partnership with the Valenzuela City Academic Center for Excellence (ValACE), a local library in Valenzuela City. The initiative was developed in alignment with the ValACE's program called *See the World – Free Telescope Viewing (FTV)*, which offers the public opportunities to observe celestial objects in the night sky from within the city. This effort supports the primary goal of V-CLUE: *to engage the public in astronomy*. Activities include monthly public lectures, hands-on workshops, and Astronomy for Kids (AFK) program, which is specifically designed to introduce children to astronomy through age-appropriate activities. Initial observations revealed varying numbers of participants present at each event, suggesting that public engagement depends largely on interest and awareness. Therefore, by leveraging local libraries as platforms for astronomy education, this initiative demonstrates that localized, low-cost astronomy education programs can be effective tools for learning. It provides valuable insight into how astronomy can be taught, learned, and experienced in non-traditional and informal educational settings.

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