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O21 - Portable Astronomy for Mindanao's Underserved Communities

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Most remote areas of Mindanao offer breathtaking views of the stars, planets, and constellations. But despite of this natural wonder, knowledge in astronomy remains limited, leaving these communities without the tools to fully appreciate and understand the celestial beauty above them. Realizing this gap, the DOST-PAGASA Mindanao Planetarium team has taken significant steps to bring astronomy closer to these underserved groups in Mindanao, which includes indigenous peoples. This is through dynamic outreach programs that is being conducted during DOST-PAGASA events, i.e., Astronomy Week and such. These efforts are meaningful for indigenous communities whose cultural traditions often hold deep connections to the sky, yet who may not have access to modern scientific resources. These initiatives include mobile planetarium shows that recreate the cosmos, telescope viewing sessions that allow participants to see celestial objects up close in real sky, and guided stargazing activities that connect the beauty of the night sky with stories and scientific explanations. Beyond these immersive experiences, the team also provides simple, hands-on astronomy activities designed to be easily replicated by these local communities, encouraging them to continue to explore and share the knowledge. By combining awe-inspiring demonstrations with practical and accessible learning tools, these programs not only spark curiosity but also nurture a deeper cultural and scientific appreciation of the universe. Ultimately, this effort transforms the natural gift of Mindanao's skies into a lasting source of inspiration, education, and wonder for generations to come.

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