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# P18 - Igniting Young Minds Through Experiential Astronomy Education: Advancing Astronomy Awareness and Science Engagement in Northern Luzon, Philippines

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Astronomy is an effective tool for promoting scientific literacy, critical thinking, and interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Following the Astronomy Teacher Training Program jointly conducted by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) and the National Astronomical Research Institute of Thailand (NARIT), trained teachers and PAGASA personnel implemented astronomy outreach activities to introduce students in Northern Luzon to basic astronomical concepts through experiential learning.

The initiative engaged elementary and secondary school students in lunar eclipse observation, constellation-making, and guided stargazing activities. These hands-on experiences enabled students to observe celestial objects directly and understand the relationship between the Earth, Moon, and Sun, planetary motion, seasons, and other natural phenomena. By connecting astronomical events to everyday life, the activities encouraged curiosity, scientific inquiry, and a greater appreciation of Earth's place in the universe.

The outreach demonstrated that experiential astronomy education is an effective approach to increasing students' interest in astronomy and STEM while enhancing teachers' confidence in delivering astronomy lessons. The program also strengthened public awareness of astronomy by making scientific concepts more accessible to young learners.

The initiative highlights the importance of sustained collaboration among government agencies, educational institutions, and local communities in expanding astronomy education. Integrating observation-based activities into science learning provides meaningful opportunities to inspire the next generation of scientists and foster a scientifically literate society.

Keywords: Astronomy education, science outreach, STEM education, astronomy observation, youth engagement, PAGASA, NARIT, Northern Luzon.

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