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O41 - NARIT Youth Camp: Entry-level astronomy camp for young adults

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In the part, “Astronomy Camp” was a relatively new concept in Thailand, with most youth having no prior experience in astronomy. The National Astronomical Research Institute of Thailand (NARIT) recognized this gap and organized “NARIT Youth Camp” (NYC) under the theme “Play, Learn, and Stargaze.” The goal is to foster a positive attitude towards learning astronomy among Thai youth by allowing them to use astronomical equipment themselves and introducing them to career paths in astronomy through professional astronomers. This helps broaden their view of astronomy as a realistic career option and provides guidance for future educational choices.

Currently, NARIT has been running the camp for over 20 years, starting alongside its establishment. To date, 3,030 participants have completed the camp out of over 20,000 applicants from across Thailand. Data from the past three years (2018-2020; 5 camps) shows that many participants have developed a greater interest in science or engineering fields after attending the camp, often continuing to engage with NARIT activities. Some even pursue careers directly related to astronomy, indicating that the camp effectively promotes sustained interest in astronomy among the youth. Many of new NARIT employees nowadays have been alumni to the NYC, which is a testament to how effective NYC was at fostering a good impression in astronomy.

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