Contribution ID: **46** Type: **Oral Presentation**

O52 - Mapping Astronomy Engagement Opportunities in the Philippines: A National Baseline Assessment of Availability, Distribution, and Descriptive Accessibility

Wednesday, 25 November 2026 15:00 (15 minutes)

Equitable access to astronomy engagement opportunities is essential for promoting scientific literacy, public participation in science, and sustained interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). However, despite the continued growth of astronomy communication initiatives in the Philippines, the national distribution, institutional landscape, and accessibility characteristics of these opportunities remain poorly documented. The absence of a consolidated national baseline limits evidence-based planning for astronomy education, outreach development, and inclusive public engagement.

This study developed a verified national inventory of publicly documented astronomy engagement opportunities in the Philippines and examined their availability, geographic distribution, institutional characteristics, and descriptive accessibility. Publicly available records from government agencies, higher education institutions, astronomy organizations, science centers, and institutional sources were collected and verified during the study period. Opportunities were classified into four functional groups: fixed-site infrastructure, formal education, organizations, and programs and activities. Descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation, and Geographic Information System (GIS)-based spatial analysis were used to characterize national patterns, while descriptive accessibility was assessed through public access, cost, appointment requirements, operational status, and implementation frequency.

A total of 36 verified astronomy engagement opportunities were identified, consisting of fixed-site infrastructure (n=10), formal education programs (n=4), organizations (n=7), and programs and activities (n=15). Results reveal substantial geographic concentration, with the National Capital Region accounting for 55.6% of documented opportunities and representing the only region with all four analytical groups. Although most opportunities were publicly accessible and offered free or low-cost participation, access to sustained astronomy engagement remains uneven, particularly outside major urban centers where permanent facilities, formal educational pathways, and locally based organizations are less represented.

This study establishes a national baseline for understanding the astronomy communication ecosystem in the Philippines and provides evidence to support inclusive astronomy education, regional outreach strategies, and more equitable public engagement initiatives.

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Session Classification: Contributor Session

Track Classification: Communicating Astronomy with the Public