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P17 - Connecting Astronomy with Environmental Stewardship: A Community Based Public Outreach Model at Bosscha Observatory

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Public outreach has become an essential part of the role of modern astronomical observatories, complementing research and education by building connections with surrounding communities. However, outreach activities have relatively limited emphasis on demonstrating how astronomy can be connected to environmental issues that are directly relevant to surrounding communities. This project aims to develop a community based public outreach model that connects astronomy with environmental stewardship by drawing on the ecological context of Bosscha Observatory, Indonesia.

Developed as part of the 2026 Bottom-Up Public Engagement Program, the model adopts a participatory approach that integrates astronomy education, environmental outreach through astronomy, and Sundanese ecological knowledge. Outreach activities begin by introducing the origin of water in the Universe and Earth's uniqueness as a habitable planet. These ideas are then connected to the role of Bosscha Observatory as a water recharge area within the upper Cipaganti watershed, providing a scientific context for discussions on local environmental conservation.

The outreach model brings together local schools, youth organizations, farmers, women's groups, university students, and community partners through educational workshops, field observations, environmental action, and collaborative reflection. Throughout these activities, astronomical concepts are introduced in the context of local environmental issues, helping participants relate astronomy to environmental challenges in their own communities.

By connecting astronomy with locally relevant environmental issues, the model broadens the role of observatories beyond research and education to include public engagement. Although developed in the context of Bosscha Observatory, the model demonstrates how locally relevant environmental issues can serve as an effective entry point for astronomy public outreach. This approach may be adapted by other observatories seeking to strengthen relationships with surrounding communities.

Keywords: Astronomy public outreach, Community engagement, Environmental stewardship, Environmental education, Observatory

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