



# Project Challenges

*TF3: General Public*

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2013

### **Astronomia Periferica**

There were three main challenges in the project:

- The turnout for participants in the Notebook Universe was far lower than expected. In spite of a campaign to attract people, only +90 people attended, out of an original expectation of 600.
- The security issues in one of the locations (Cazuca) made it very difficult to host the activities in Notebook Universe. At the end we could only host one (1) out of the four (4) planned workshops.
- Alejandro Tamayo, the leader of 'Macrocosmos and domestic microcosmos' left the country to pursue his graduate studies. As a consequence we had to implement the workshops and artistic installation following his remote indications. The local support was then given by local artists.

### **Chinese Poetry Astrophotography**

Because we do not have enough money to create the website, we invited a friend to do it after work. He found it challenging and was not able to finish it. As a result, I found another small company to continue the website construction. It wasted some time.

### **Dark Skies Outreach to Sub-Saharan Africa**

- ***Problematic Internet Connectivity:*** Due to different community capabilities, many of the coordinators in Africa did not have good internet connections. A number of the coordinators stated that this issue was one of the main reasons for their limited participation in the Google Hangout sessions (i.e. Mimouni's and Bonaventure's groups). While this is a difficult condition to deal with, there were a number of ways in which NOAO staff adapted the program to help the situation. NOAO staff recorded the Google Hangout sessions so that they could be watched anytime, anywhere. Mr. Mimouni's group took full advantage of these videos as they were never able to fully connect while the sessions were live. NOAO staff also researched ways to better help slow internet connections, and provided full technical support to ensure that the sessions could best serve the coordinators.
- ***Lack or slow communication:*** This was a complex project working with numerous different coordinators from different countries. Thus communication was key for its success. Due to the conflicting schedules, time-zone differences,

and the amount of existing work of each participant, communication between coordinators and NOAO staff was lacking at times. This issue was discussed at length earlier. NOAO staff used two strategies to deal with communication issues. First, NOAO staff adapted a strategy of communication so that coordinators did not have to rely on Google Hangouts. Coordinators were continually emailed all the information and updates they needed on a more regular basis to keep everyone informed. This allowed coordinators to stay in the loop more frequently, and provide a stepping stone for participants to become active in the project at any point during the project. Secondly, NOAO contacted IAU and asked for their assistance in contacting the coordinators. IAU staff were much closer to the coordinators than the NOAO staff, and were more able to contact the coordinators to get more responses. This strategy increased responses from local coordinators also improving overall communication.

- ***Challenges keeping to assigned schedule:*** All of the coordinators were active in their communities and specific field of work, thus leading to busy schedules of responsibilities. While this project had a set schedule of information sessions and due dates, a number of coordinators found it hard to meet the predetermined dates. With this in mind, the NOAO staff was flexible with the coordinators, giving them the necessary time to complete their assignments while giving them the technical support and resources they needed to best serve their teachers and students.
- ***Getting materials to coordinators:*** Most support kits arrived on time and fully intact. However, international customs made it difficult for some of the coordinators them to receive their packages, and required additional payments for their retrieval. While there was little NOAO staff could do physically at these customs locations, they worked with the local customs and tried to give the coordinators as much information about the custom process as possible. This issue is an important one to be aware of for future projects working with different countries.

2014

### **Accessible Citizen Science**

The Zooniverse is still unable to escape its inherent structural biases, being an English-speaking collaboration in the Western world. It would greatly improve the effectiveness of the work undertaken as part of this grant if the translation tools were communicated beyond the Zooniverse's usual channels. We have seen that when translated into languages such as Russian, Hebrew, and Farsi, there is a great potential uptake and there scope for reaching new people.

If the OAD is interested in further supporting the Zooniverse in this regard, then a short, structured programme of communication about translation would be very beneficial.

2015

### **Obsesion Por El Cielo Weekly Radio Show**

The biggest challenge was writing, editing and producing the audios. In reality all tasks took about twice as much time and effort to do than expected. The writing and recording in particular had to be done in separate sessions instead of a continuous one. Editing the audios was also difficult since it was something I had never done before. Our second edition of the audios will probably be reedited to include better music and perhaps sound effects.

Another challenge was the rapid devaluation of the Mexican peso vs the euro and the US dollar. Some of the estimates done at the proposal stage of the project had to be reevaluated later as things became more expensive. At the end we had to cover the podcast cost for two years in order to pay for the other items in the list of things, but that is OK.