



Universe Awareness UNAWE

Building the Scientific Mind
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Inspiring young children - the Beautiful Universe



UNAWE Philosophy

- Initiative for a worldwide scientific culture.
- Expose **very young** (ages 4 - 10 years), **underprivileged** children to the **inspirational** aspects of astronomy.
 - Broaden their perspective
 - Enhance their understanding of the world
 - Demonstrate the power of self-determined thought
- By broadening children's minds, UNAWE hopes to **stimulate tolerance and internationalism**



Motivation

- Beauty and size of the Universe **excite** young children
- **Basic knowledge of the Universe is a Birthright**
- Ages 4 - 10 are crucial for **child development**
- Knowledge about the Universe can **broaden the mind**
- Why young and underprivileged children?
 - Need is greatest
 - Cognitive disparities increase with age
 - Cultural differences less pronounced

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Astronomy for Peace Education

- Science
 - Investigation, curiosity
 - Ambassador for all sciences
 - Development of technology
- Culture
 - History
 - past & in the making!
 - Cultural heritage
- Multidisciplinary
 - The big questions
- FUN!
 - Beautiful images
 - Extreme conditions
 - Unreachable yet available to all



Astronomy as Science

- Curiosity and sense of adventure
- Rational explanations
- Astronomy is multidisciplinary
 - physics, chemistry, maths, computer science, biology
- Super-history
- Challenging
 - Light from different times
 - Coherent movement across the sky
- Development of technology
 - Opportunities



Astronomy as Culture

- Humankind's scientific and cultural heritage
 - Tool for positioning, navigation, timing (seasons)
 - Clock and calendar
 - Myths and legends
 - Serving educational purpose
 - Entertainment too!
 - Culture and emotional link to the sky, **Ownership**
 - Rational only leaves room for emotional catches such as dogma and superstition
 - Use FOLKLORE
 - e.g. Immigrant communities



Astronomy as ambassador for diversity

- Cultural awareness - identity and tolerance through folklore
 - Exotic diversity (animal constellations: zoological diversity)
- Appreciation of diversity in building a value system

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Astronomy as heritage

- Astronomy a household name, part of the landscape
- “Training” as dialogue and enactment of the evolution of human understanding
- Delivery through communities: ownership enabling discussion of fears and dogmatic beliefs
- Debate among adults illustrates relativity of knowledge

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Astronomy as Common Social Ground

- Bottom-up approach values people's contribution
 - Better respect
 - Better self-esteem
- For both the individuals and the communities
- Reproduced later in life



Conclusions

- Astronomy more than rich and fun science, also emotional link to the sky
- History and culture (diverse human family)
- Multidisciplinary (environment, etc.)
- Tool for a culture of peace
 - In its subject matter but also in the delivery in an astronomy programme
- That's what UNAWE hopes to achieve