



A Modern Explorer's Journey – using events for innovative multipurpose educational outreach

Bente Lilja Bye

BLB, Norway (bente@blb.as)

Earth observations are important across the specter of geo-sciences. The Group on Earth Observations (GEO) is coordinating efforts to build a Global Earth Observation System of Systems, or GEOSS. The lack of dedicated funding to support specific Science & Technology activities in support of GEOSS is one of the most important obstacles to engaging the Science & Technology communities in its implementation. Finding resources to outreach and capacity building is likewise a challenge. The continuation of GEO and GEOSS rely on political support which again is influenced by public opinions.

The GEO Ministerial Summit in 2014 was an event that both needed visibility and represented an opportunity to mobilize the GEO community in producing outreach and educational material. Through the combined resources from two of GEO tasks in the GEO work plan, a multipurpose educational outreach project was planned and executed. This project addressed the following issues:

How can the GEO community mobilize resources for its work plan projects in the Societal Benefit Area Water?

How can we produce more educational and capacity building material?

How can the GEO community support the GEO secretariat related to public relations (material and otherwise)

Based on activities described in the GEO work plan, a showcase video and online campaign consisting on a series of webinars were developed and produced. The video and webinars were linked through a common reference: the water cycle. Various aspects of the water cycle ranging from general to more technical and scientific education were covered in the webinars, while the video called A Modern Explorer's Journey focused on story telling with a more emotional appeal. The video was presented to the Ministers at the GEO Ministerial Summit and distributed widely to the GEO community and through social media and articles (as embedded YouTube and more).

A discussion of challenges and successes of this event-based educational outreach project will be presented.

Continued use of new outreach tools such as web technology and social innovations for more efficient use of limited resources will remain an issue for the scientific community. Lessons learned need to be provided continuously and this project add to this material.