

# Education and Public Outreach in Planetary Science through NASA’s Solar System Ambassadors Program: Widening Engagement with Under-Represented Communities

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## Abstract

Over the course of humankind’s journey on Earth, our interest and fascination for space has always expanded. Our curiosity has led us from peering through the night sky among the planets and moons of the Solar System, to setting foot on the lunar surface and reaching the Sun with unprecedented proximity. As a result, we have become more and more familiar with these unique worlds, and perhaps reached a sense of kin with our cosmic backyard. With the increasing amount of data generated by spacecraft missions, laboratory data and theoretical analyses, and the crucial need for thorough and up-to-date science communication with society as a whole, Education and Public Outreach (EPO) activities are vital in maintaining both the sharing of scientific knowledge and united enthusiasm for space exploration. Particularly, building an inclusive array and common interest in space sciences with equal opportunities can benefit from a broad range of means. This effort is notably important in the ever-expanding Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) field [2].

The resources for effective EPO vary widely. Widening participation and involvement in planetary sciences in order to effectively reach diverse audiences requires adequate capabilities tailored in particular to usually under-represented communities. To address this topic, undergoing efforts carried out by NASA will be presented, e.g. [1], with a specific emphasis on NASA’s Solar System Ambassadors (SSA) Program, created in 1997 and managed by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The SSA Program works with expert volunteers across all 50 U.S. states to share the latest science and discoveries of NASA’s space exploration missions through EPO events. As a Solar System Ambassador, I will present my engagement in EPO focused on under-represented

communities in the Bay Area of California, USA. Furthermore, short-term and long-term impacts of these activities at large will be presented, while exploring varied, complementary and forthcoming avenues of planetary science communication.

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## References

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