

Meet our Neighbours – a tactile experience

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Abstract

Planetary science is a key field in astronomy that draws lots of attention and that engages large amounts of enthusiasts. On its essence, it is a visual science and the current resources and activities for the inclusion of visually impaired children, although increasing, are still costly and somewhat scarce. Therefore there is a paramount need to develop more low cost resources in order to provide experiences that can reach all, even the more socially deprived communities.

“Meet our neighbours! - a tactile experience”, plans to promote and provide inclusion activities for visually impaired children and their non-visually impaired peers through the use of astronomy hands-on low cost activities. Is aimed for children from the ages of 6 to 12 years old and produced a set 13 tactile images of the main objects of the Solar System that can be used in schools, science centres and outreach associations.

Accessing several common problems through tactile resources, with this project we present ways to successfully provide low cost solutions (avoiding the expensive tactile printing costs), promote inclusion and interactive hands-on activities for visually impaired children and their non-visually impaired peers and create dynamic interactions based on oral knowledge transmission between them.

Here we describe the process of implementing such initiative near target communities: establishing a bridge between scientists, children and teachers. The struggles and challenges perceived during the project and the enrichment experience of engaging astronomy with these specific groups, broadening horizons in an overall experience accessible to all.