



EPSC Abstracts

Vol. 15, EPSC2021-9, 2021

<https://doi.org/10.5194/epsc2021-9>

Europlanet Science Congress 2021

© Author(s) 2022. This work is distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License.



## NoRCEL and its Outreach in Sub Saharan Africa

### Sohan Jheeta

NoRCEL, United Kingdom of Great Britain – England, Scotland, Wales (sohan@sohanjheeta.com)

Currently there are low levels of access to high quality education and learning facilities in certain developing nations, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, at best, some university facilities there are barely comparable to western high school levels and, at worse, they don't even have modern laboratory equipment; the basics that they do have being relics from the 1960's and 70's. In addition, I know of at least one secondary school in Malawi where there are two "sittings" — a morning session for one set of pupils and an afternoon for the second. Both with the same teachers. That is to say, there is both the lack of qualified teachers and they cannot afford to expand the school. During the last six years I myself have been promoting science throughout parts of the developing world, principally through astronomy because this is one science which is common to humanity.

I have given numerous oral presentations on space in general, astrochemistry, astrobiology and astrophysics as well as helping to promote an interest in these subjects by holding specific workshops. Until now, I have been operating as a "one-man band" and the challenge is to encourage students to become involved and active in astronomy, astrophysics, astrochemistry and astrobiology (theastrosiences) and then to support them should they wish to progress further and take up a career in these fields. There are many difficulties to overcome, including lack of awareness and inclusion with the wider world, as well as a severe lack of funding. The many talented and able students who could become assets in the field of astronomy are missing out and if only they had the opportunity, they could really develop their capabilities and become excellent researchers and astronomers. In order to even stand a chance of making this happen, we need liaison with European established organisations that can deliver both expertise, funding and definitive, quantifiable schemes which will raise the expectations of these students as well as the universities. The ultimate goal is to put astronomy on the curriculum. The interest I have so far been able to generate amongst students is intense and I have been inspired by their enthusiasm, so the time is now right to develop and widen these activities in a more organised and proactive manner and this is where NoRCEL comes into force.

Currently, NoRCEL is researching the possibility of setting up a virtual Science Education Institute which will be launched next year in conjunction with Professor Golden Gadzirayi Nyambuya of the National University of Science & Technology, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.