

ESO/ESA/IAU/Excellence Cluster 'Universe'

Astronomy Communication Seminars

— Monthly half-hour seminars about contemporary issues in astronomy communication

3rd March 2008

14:00-14:30

ESO Auditorium



Astronomy Education and Public Outreach in Africa

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and Carolina Ödman (Universe Awareness)

Abstract: In many developing countries, especially in Africa, the stars have always been a part of people's everyday lives, be it in the form of folklore, superstition, navigation or even agricultural indicators. It has not, however, reached many countries' science education and outreach communities. The International Year of Astronomy (IYA2009) serves not only as an opportunity to boost astronomy within these communities, but also to celebrate the rich history and culture that has existed for thousands of years. 2009 is an opportunity not just to promote astronomy, but also to spark curiosity and spur a culture of learning, a vital need in developing countries since education is considered the most sustainable form of development. The road that we are on for building Astronomy in Africa will be discussed with strong mention of opportunities for input and collaboration. An example of the impact of international programmes in Africa will be given in the form of the Universe Awareness Programme for young children. Specific mention will also be made of another one of the Global Cornerstones for IYA2009 entitled "Developing Astronomy Globally" – a cornerstone from which Africa hopes to benefit greatly.

