

School Visits

All school visits in the Northern Cape were part of the programme to expose the learners to astronomy through storytelling and learner centred activities. The focus group was Grades 1 to 3 and the topic focused on was the Moon.

Although the story was presented in English by me, some educators and Karel Klein translated it into Afrikaans for the learners. This is due to the fact that Foundation Phase learners are taught in their mother tongue. The uses of the visual aids enhanced the story telling and enable the learners to understand and repeat key phrases of the story. Learners were also keen to tell the story in their own words. Some learners were also willing to speak in English when answering questions based on the story. The excitement created after the storytelling enables the team to further enhance the curiosity of the learners.

Anthony, Willem and Karel actively participated in the classroom activities from setting up the activities to demonstrating and offering simple astronomical information. There were 3 activities per lesson and learners were able to participate in all because they were short, interactive learning sessions. Learners were eager to try and participate in all. Some activities like looking through the telescope and creating moon craters were more popular than drawing what they saw on the moon and a moon puzzle.

In total 409 learners were reached. At the end of the class visits, many of the learners were able to relay some information of the Moon, with regard to its shape, colour and characteristics. It was essential that we recapped what we had learnt before leaving the classroom.

At the educator workshops, all of the educators who were part of the school visit reported that some of them continued the discussion with the learners. They had learnt new information and their learners were excited about the new information learnt. This clearly indicates that storytelling is an essential ingredient when introducing an astronomical concept to young learners. It is also important that the activities linked to the story were at the level of the learners for information to be processed.