



- Titel:** ASA2012 – Astronomie mit Südafrika
ASA2012 – Astronomy with South Africa
- German partner:** Dr. Cecilia Scorza
House of Astronomy, Heidelberg
- South African partner:** Dr. Rodney Thebe Medupe
North West University NWU, Mafikeng
- Dr. Sivuyile Manxoyi
South African Astronomical Observatory, Kapstadt
- Event:** Schools competition, Germany, June to August 2012
Summer school, Heidelberg 10-15 September 2012
Conference with award ceremony 16-19 October 2012, Heidelberg
Trip to South Africa for the prizewinners including a visit to the science festival in Grahamstown/South Africa, 13-19 March 2013

Brief description:

Astronomy holds a special place among the natural sciences as it encompasses almost all fields of physics and offers numerous links to neighbouring disciplines. Many phenomena of astronomy can only be discovered with the help of computer science, chemistry, biology, geography, geology, mineralogy and meteorology. In an increasingly specialised world astronomy has thus acquired the character of a universal science. German-South African activities are taking advantage of this universal appeal: firstly to awaken an interest in natural science among South African and German schoolchildren, students and teachers and secondly, to strengthen international cooperation between astronomers and science communicators.

Here the various target groups were addressed by various specialist events. First of all, a nationwide schools competition was organised in July and August 2012 with the aim of giving three selected German schools the opportunity to each conclude a partnership with a South African high school. The plan was to develop a convincing concept for such a partnership, providing for both astronomical and cultural activities between schoolchildren from the two countries. The three winning teams have already been chosen: the schools Einstein-Gymnasium Neuenhagen, CJD Christophorusschule Königswinter and Carl-Bosch Gymnasium Ludwigshafen. In March 2013 each school will be sending a delegation consisting of one teacher and two pupils to South Africa, where they will visit their partner school and present joint projects at the National Science Festival in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape, from 13 to 19 March 2013 .



Secondly, three South African students took part in the international summer school of the International Max Planck Research School (IMPRS) organised in September 2012 on the subject of "Astronomy & Cosmic Physics" by the University of Heidelberg and the Max Planck Institute for Astronomy (MPIA). In return, training officers from the House of Astronomy will also be travelling to Grahamstown to attend the 2013 National Science Festival.

Another important event was the conference "The South African sky above Germany" held at the House of Astronomy in Heidelberg from 16 to 19 October 2012. It was dedicated to aspects of astronomy as related to education and publicity and the opportunities for the introduction of this science in schools. 21 teachers from South African high schools and astronomers took part in the training sessions, presentations and workshops. On the final two days of the conference the participants were joined by a group of 25 teachers from all 16 of Germany's federal states. The highlight of the conference was the event entitled "The South African sky above Germany" at the House of Astronomy, which was attended on this final day of the conference by some 100 German and South African guests. Following a varied supporting programme of activities about astronomy in South Africa, the conference then drew to a close with the official announcement of the winners of the schools competition.