Astronomy for Inclusion: a Chance for Regional and International Cooperation

Kumiko Usuda-Sato[1]; Lina Canas[1]; Yukiko Shibata[1]; Shin Mineshige[2]
[1]National Astronomical Observatory of Japan (NAOJ) / IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO); [2] Kyoto University

Astronomy is one of the most fascinating science fields and it is important to develop accessible resources for diverse people. In Japan, the Universal Design Astronomy Working Group was established in 2006 for 6 years and has developed multimodal textbooks and a human network among astronomy educators and visually and auditory impaired people. At headquarters of National Astronomical Observatory of Japan (NAOJ), symposia were held in 2010 and 2013 and a lot of original resources and approaches were introduced.

In September 2016, the third Symposium on Universal Design for Astronomy Education with Workshop for Educational Material Development was held at NAOJ headquarters. This was a 3-day symposium with 131 people participating, including people with special needs (9 visually impaired, 16 hearing impaired). A total of 15 workshops were provided in 2 days, with each of the activities replicable by the participants in which educators and people with disabilities worked together, with some of the activities facilitated by people with disabilities. IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO) and the IAU Division C Commission C1 Working Group 3 "Astronomy for Equity and Inclusion" supported the symposium and promoted an international English-speaking workshop on the third day with the participation of 15 foreigners and 12 Japanese people (additionally to Japanese-English translations). This symposium was the first approach to establish an Asian-Pacific network of Astronomy for Inclusion and to disseminate Japanese resources through the international community and to the Japanese community to learn about international inclusive programs. In this work, we present focus on our Japanese universal design approaches and the potential for regional and international collaborations in this field.