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"MIRANDO AL CIELO", ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC EVENTS FOR SKY OBSERVATIONS

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RESUMEN

Los eventos llamados "Mirando al Cielo", son actividades donde se reunen actividades académicas, culturales y comerciales, promoviendo el conocimiento y la economía del lugar. Las actividades académicas son realizadas por estudiantes y profesores de la región y han sido organizadas por la UNAM. Las actividades culturales y comerciales son seleccionadas entre las actividades típicas del lugar y son realizadas bajo la dirección de las autoridades del lugar, con la participación de su población.

ABSTRACT

The events called "Mirando al cielo" encompass academic, cultural and economic activities with the purpose of promoting the knowledge and furthering the economy of the place where they are held. The academic activities are carried out by students and teachers of the region, and have been organized by UNAM. The cultural and commercial activities are selected among those typical of each place and carried out under the direction of local authorities, with the participation of their inhabitants.

Key Words: miscellaneous

Since 2008 to date, we have carried out several "Mirando al cielo" events for which we have developed strategies permitting us to improve the way in which they are carried out. In the following we present what we consider to be the most important issues in the planning previous to the event, such as: selecting the date of the event, the place where it could be held, the activities to be carried out and their distribution at the chosen site, planning the movement of the persons in the different work areas, and training of teachers and students.

These types of activities, where we bring together people for describing to them the sky so they can admire it with their own eyes and with the telescope, are marvelous. We help the people to discover by themselves the details of the Moon or of the planets which they would not be able to see otherwise. They may have heard of them or seen their pictures, but now they are revealed to them in real life. The main difference of these events is that jointly with the academic activities, we promote the realization of cultural and commercial activities in order to propitiate the cultural and economic development of the place.

A key part of the event is: when should it take place? I recommend that whenever possible, the selected date should be that of the waning or the waxing of the Moon. For the observation of the Moon, assign the smallest telescopes to the students less experienced in handling them. With the selected date, the planets and Messier objects should be located at the celestial maps as well as possible observation of stars showers. In the working plan, it is suggested to include information about luminous contamination and give some examples of it. The higher the contamination, less stars can be seen, so it is important to make the visitors conscious about this problem.

Where it should be carried out? Once the date is selected, the next step is the site. It may be already pre-established or you will have to select it yourself. Keep in mind that the place should have enough space for areas of sky observation, telescopes, workshops, cultural events, food and handicraft stalls, didactic materials, and public services such as bathrooms and emergency stations. It is important to visit the place suggested to you for the event. Verify that the observation zone does not have architectonic obstacles, is free of luminous contamination and of obstacles that would impede the observation of the sky. The site of location of the telescopes should be even and wide enough so that there would be a minimal distance of eight meters between each one of them. Inspect the luminaries and see which can be covered or turned off during the event; designate a person responsible for acquiring the necessary material to cover them up, and who will see that they are covered or turned off on the day of the event.

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