



ALICE2 Case Study

Democratising science: A road paved by the Academia in favour of primary education

RedCLARA (Latin America), REUNA (Chile) and CUDI (México), the Coordination of the Los Ríos Region EXPLORA CONICYT Programme and the Informatics Centre of the Austral University of Chile (UACH), took science from university to primary

schools in Chile and Mexico. The first successful experience was the series of videoconferences called “Climate Change: A look towards the future” in 2008, followed by another series on Astronomy in 2009, and a third one on Biodiversity in 2010.

More than 15,000 Chilean and Mexican students, as well as teachers from both countries, participated in the series on climate change in face-to-face, videoconference and streaming modality organised by RedCLARA in 2008. Furthermore, the Austral University of Chile (UACH) made available a virtual education platform which enabled presenting scientists to provide contents for students to develop preparation activities and interact with them in each conference. The students who participated remotely made questions via instant messaging and through a form available on the transmissions page of the UACH’s online television signal, TV Austral, and these were answered by the scientists during the same transmission, thus generating an environment of virtual synchronic work.

Ricardo Lagos Escobar, former President of Chile and Special Envoy on Climate Change for the UN, was one of the speakers at such series of conferences, which included scientists from the UACH, from

the University of La Frontera (UFRO, Chile) and from the Autonomous University of Nuevo León (UANL, Mexico).

Six videoconferences, five transmitted from Valdivia and one from Mexico, constituted the introductory series where children and researchers and experts from both hemispheres shared visions, interacted and discussed about climate change, an issue of greater global interest.

“Astromania: The fascinating mysteries of the Universe”, was the name given in 2009 by the Explora Coordination within the context of the International Astronomy Year to the series of videoconferences reedited in 2010 under the name “Territory and Biodiversity”. The sessions of these two latest series included the active participation of students all along Chile; they were connected through the videoconference system enhanced by





Chile's national research and education network, REUNA, had the chance to interact with renowned speakers and get to know from the primary source about the most relevant aspects of the Universe and Biodiversity of our planet.

The development of these initiatives and of the human networks established led the Explora Programme to be invited to participate in the Astronomy workshop called "We bring the Universe to your school: Cosmology for Future Astronomers", organised by the National Autonomous University of Mexico. During

the activity, which was held in November 2010, 25 students from 6 to 12 years old coming from different schools in the Los Ríos Region (Chile), participated together with students from Mexico and Peru, through videoconference, in the activity.

Thanks to the use of technology, so close to them, students received scientific knowledge from a primary source. At the end of each session, children and teenagers had the chance to express their concerns, listen to the answers and even give their opinion on those mysteries which science is still trying to unveil.

According to the Coordinator of the Los Ríos Region Explora Programme, Lilian Villanueva, the interactive nature of these activities awoke the interest not only of students, but also of teachers, who were able to innovate in their lessons. Another positive outcome of the talks was the feeling of inclusion generated in students, especially those in geographically isolated zones, who were able to connect with their peers in Chile and also abroad.



More information:

TV Austral | <http://www.uach.cl/tvaustral>

REUNA | <http://www.reuna.cl>

"Thanks to the support of academic networks we had access to a better transmission quality and expanded coverage, thus eliminating geographical barriers and cutting across our country's borders, all of which is, undoubtedly, a contribution to the democratisation of science and technology".

Lilian Villanueva, Coordinator of the Los Ríos Region Explora Programme, Chile.



"An Academic Network is not only a platform of high-speed networks; it is above all a network of people interconnected at a global level. In that sense, this experience clearly shows the scope that initiatives for science dissemination through the use of these networks can have and the impact on the work of universities in relation to their relevant environment, their international relations and local and regional consolidation".

Paola Arellano, REUNA Executive Director, Chile.



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