

PLOAD: Igniting Stellar Passions in Portuguese-speaking Communities

MARTA FILIPA SIMÕES^{1,2}, PATRÍCIA FIGUEIRÓ SPINELLI³, JOANA M. DA SILVA⁴, JOANA LATAS^{4,5}, JOANA MARQUES⁶, VINICIUS OLIVEIRA^{4,7} AND PLOAD TEAM⁴

¹Macau Center for Space Exploration and Science, China
National Space Administration (CNSA)

²State Key Laboratory of Lunar and Planetary Sciences
(SKLPlanets), Macau University of Science and Technology
(MUST)

³Museum of Astronomy and Related Sciences

⁴NUCLIO - Núcleo Interativo de Astronomia e Inovação em
Educação

⁵Center for Research in Education and Psychology, University of
Évora (CIEP-UE)

⁶Institute of Astrophysics and Space Sciences, University of
Coimbra

⁷Universidade Federal do Pampa (UNIPAMPA)

Presenting Author: msimoes@must.edu.mo

The Portuguese Language Office of Astronomy for Development (PLOAD; <http://pload.org>) is an International Astronomical Union (IAU) structure that aims to promote its activities in Portuguese-speaking countries and communities worldwide. PLOAD, represented on four continents, highlights the significant role that Astrobiology, Astronomy, and Science play in sustainable development.

PLOAD has a global presence, establishing itself in various countries and communities. It regularly initiates collaboration protocols, defines shared values, and consolidates its presence through intercultural dialogues, bound by the Portuguese language and the beacon of Astronomy for development. It strives to uphold equal access to quality education and promote gender equity in scientific careers. These principles have been translated into action in various ways, leading to political awareness about integrating scientists into the local economy in some contexts and creating equal opportunities for leadership roles in science in others.

One of PLOAD's recent actions was the development of an online activity (via WhatsApp) for high school and university students to celebrate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. This one-month activity engaged girls from several countries: Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Macau, Mozambique, and Portugal, culminating in a podcast available on Spotify (<https://open.spotify.com/show/6k5MwZN7XOwgBjNM8gKTiE?si=b98c2e81fb0444ea&nd=1&dlsi=7e1a36b78afa429c>), on Padlet (<https://padlet.com/meninas1/faz-ci-ncia-como-uma-menina-p25x4nkr6b8kinbx>), and on PLOAD's web page.

The diversity of the audience has led to fruitful reflections, and the activity had the support of local PLOAD collaborators, ensuring participant engagement. The activity had different parts focused on astronomy, the moon, and astrobiology, amplifying the reach of scientific content.

In conclusion, PLOAD fosters unity among Portuguese-speaking communities worldwide and uses science divulgation as a tool to achieve its goals. Through its outreach efforts, PLOAD aims to inspire a new generation of astronomers, astrobiologists, and scientists, contributing to global sustainable development.