

Stars Shine for Everyone and Science4Girls

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<http://www.ssvi.be/>
<http://www.ssvi.be/node/3>
<http://www.ssvi.be/node/11>

I came up with Stars Shine for Everybody (Sterren Schitteren Voor Iedereen), www.ssvi.be, at the beginning of 2015 during a train trip on my way to Ghent. I am a volunteer at the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Ghent University and at the Armand Pien People's Observatory, affiliated to the same university.

The origin of this idea; at the university you always come into contact with people who have the opportunity to follow an education, and then you suddenly realize that there are a lot of people in this world who don't have these opportunities. Young people who do not have the chance for some reason to admire the sky through a telescope. This was the basic idea.

Shortly afterwards I also told Harrie Rutten, among others the author of Telescope Optics, about this. He spontaneously supported this idea and offered his help. He contacted Helmut Ebbert from Bresser and a start could be made. This was followed of course, with a great deal of consultation about the approach, the goal and where to raise the funds. Not so simple, especially the latter.

Helmut provided 30 telescopes to start with.

Volunteers from our observatory took care of the assembly: handmade. My colleague, Guy Wauters, designed this assembly.

We started in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and England. Institutions and schools for children with disabilities. In Germany, Walter Hohman Sternwarte took care of the project. In our countries, an educational (extended) package always accompanies the telescope. Sound guidance is crucial; educational package and cooperation with Universe Awareness, Astronomers Without Borders and IAU. The project is also on the IAU's recommended list.

Shortly after we started, Harrie suffered a major traffic accident with very serious consequences. He was injured in a life-threatening way. The accident, even after revalidation, resulted in severe limitations for him. Which does NOT take away the fact that he still represents a great deal of support for me. That's how he translated this writing. Without him, Helmut and the cooperation of the university and popular observatory and his volunteers, there was no project

I myself went in search of support from traders, publishers, well-known people. This worked fine! Our first Belgian astronaut, Dirk Frimout, became supporter of the project 'Stars Shine'. This immediately gave a boost.....

Very shortly after, I expanded the project with a spin-off: 'Science4Girls'.

This is for countries where girls have difficult access to education. Frank De Winne became our second Belgian astronaut and director of EAC (European Astronaut Center) supporter. Numerous NASA and ESA astronauts joined in here. E.g.; Apollo 16 astronaut Charlie Duke, Anna Lee Fisher, Scott Kelly, Andreas Mogensen, Alexander Gerst, Thomas Pesquet and many others. The reason: they too believe that everyone should have access to quality education. Certainly in the field of science and technology.

By now Helmut donated more than 130 telescopes for this cause.

Dirk Frimout even spoke in a series of space lessons on Youtube: French and Dutch. In the future, this will be subtitled. In the meantime (in three years' time) the project is present in 32 countries including e.g. Mozambique, Senegal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sao Tome, Indonesia and Nepal. Please note that each candidate will be screened. It must also remain useful!

And well, there is a lot of support from private individuals who support it with small amounts of money. Cooking costs money...

ENGIE also supported us in the past with a sum of money.

I would also like to mention that the telescopes are being donated completely free of charge at the moment. We want to keep it that way if possible. The threshold cannot be lower...

If you need more information, do not hesitate to ask for it.

END

PS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIzwFyaODrA&feature=youtu.be>

<http://www.flanderstoday.eu/education/stars-shine-special-education-ugents-telescope-projects>