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IAstro Júnior – Spreading Science to Younger Generations

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The Science Communication Group at the Instituto de Astrofísica e Ciências do Espaço (IA) promotes science literacy in Astronomy and good practices in the communication of science. Trying to reach new audiences in an unconventional and creative way, we developed several outreach activities, one of them is IAstro Júnior.

IAstro Júnior is an outreach activity aimed at children aged 7 to 12 years. This activity was developed from start with the collaboration of the most well-known and prestigious Portuguese youth magazine – Visão Júnior.

IAstro Júnior events happen four times a year in two cities in Portugal. In each event a different topic of Astronomy is presented in very short and interactive talks by three researchers of our Institute. At the end of the session, children can place their questions directly to the researchers. Children, who didn't have the opportunity, or didn't want to ask questions during the session, are invited to write them and leave them in a box. The questions are answered by our researchers and the answers published in the magazine Visão Júnior.

IAstro Júnior events take place at two large Planetariums in Portugal – Planetário Calouste Gulbenkian – Centro Ciência Viva, in Lisbon and Planetário do Porto – Centro de Ciência Viva, in Oporto, reaching, all together, hundreds of children. Besides, IAstro Júnior events and contents are published in the magazine Visão Júnior, reaching more than 18 000 children, parents and teachers throughout the country and abroad.

This project enables us to communicate Astronomy to a new, well defined and strategically important target group with the help of skilled professionals, besides involving scientists in the communication and training them with communication skills. Also, IAstro Júnior, through the partnership with magazine Visão Júnior and the Planetariums, allows us to reach and spread IA's name and visual identity to much wider audiences with a small budget, with benefits for all parties involved. With IAstro Júnior we are promoting Astronomy among younger generations, bridging science to society.

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