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Title: The Italian Museo Nazionale dell'Antartide: National and International Contribution to education, outreach and training

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Presentation Allocated: poster

abstract: The Italian Museo Nazionale dell'Antartide (www.mna.it) was established as a consortium of three universities (Genova, Siena, Trieste) in 1996 with the aim to preserve, study, and increase the value of all material collected during the Italian Antarctic expeditions, and to promote public understanding of Antarctic science. All three sections hold a permanent exhibition to promote the knowledge of the Antarctic continent. The Genova section is dedicated to biology and ecology, Siena to Earth sciences and Trieste to history of exploration and marine geology. The contribution of the museum to education, outreach and training is devoted to promote the polar knowledge to schools through lectures, guided visits and didactic experiments to all-level students, from kindergarten to PhD level. Recent and ongoing initiatives are: -travelling exhibition-support to the PhD school on polar science-polar summer school for teachers-organization of workshops and congresses on polar topics, climate change, extreme environments; -editing of proceedings and special issues of scientific journals-theatrical performances on the exploration of Antarctica. The travelling exhibition was realized as a contribution to IPY 2007-2008 aiming at attracting the interest of the public, media and students on the role of the polar regions for our planet. The exhibition visited several Italian cities and a few European and Mediterranean countries. The PhD school on polar science, based at the University of Siena, a partner of the International Antarctic Institute, benefits from the support of the museum in terms of access to the library, biological and abiological specimens and financial support to fellowships. Within the frame of an agreement with the Italian National Antarctic Programme and the Ministry of Education, University and Research, a polar summer school for teachers has been established. The school aims at teaching polar science topics and giving tools and techniques to be included in science curricula. Participation to a scientific experiment in Antarctica is offered to the teacher, winner of a contest on an original laboratory activity on polar science. The museum is also partner of international initiatives devoted to the dissemination of information on Antarctic biology and biodiversity (SCAR Marine Biodiversity Information Network, Encyclopaedia of Life, Antarctic Field Guides). The museum publishes scientific journals, volumes, and multimedia.