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Astronomical | Astronomy
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NEWS



OAD Annual Call for Proposals

The 2016 OAD Annual Call for Proposals has been released. The OAD invites proposals for projects that use Astronomy as a tool to address an issue related to sustainable development. It is open to anyone from anywhere in the world. Deadline for applications is September 15. Read the [Announcement](#)



TED Talk: How a blind astronomer found a way to hear the stars

OAD post-doctoral researcher, Dr Wanda Diaz, gave a talk at TEDx Vancouver. She talked about the sonification techniques that she uses to conduct research and her "dreams of a level scientific playing field" that allows people with disabilities to contribute to the field.

View the [TED talk](#)



Interview of OAD Director

The OAD director was interviewed on television when he met the South African minister of science and technology in Sutherland. The minister visited various community projects that have come about as a result of hosting the Southern African Large Telescope.

View the [interview](#)

PROJECT UPDATES



Virtual Observatory Workshops

As part of the ongoing AstroVarsity project, the OAD sponsored a workshop at the University of Zululand to continue the development of capacity for the introduction of astronomy within the Physics department. The OAD and SAAO also hosted a teacher workshop to introduce schools to potential activities with Virtual Observatory tools

Read about the [AstroVarsity project](#)



Astronomy outreach for science clubs

A group of students from the University of Cape Town will run Astronomy outreach activities for school science clubs, which will include telescope construction and observations. The university team won an OAD grant in a [NASSP program](#) competition that invited proposals for Astronomy outreach projects. Their activities are scheduled to be implemented in September 2016.

REGIONAL OFFICES - HIGHLIGHTS

- **Andean ROAD** was presented to the community during the CAP2016 hosted in Colombia. The 4 Andean ROAD coordinators had a meeting with Rosa Doran from Portuguese LOAD to plan a collaboration
- **Arab ROAD and LOAD** hosted by Arab Union for Astronomy and Space Sciences has a dedicated website at <http://aw-road.auass.com/>
- **East African ROAD** organized a public lecture in space science and technology areas by the chairperson of African Union Commission
- **East Asian ROAD and LOAD** held monthly Fun with Physics events for children of migrant families. And a lecture programme in English co-sponsored by the EA-ROAD
- **Portuguese LOAD** held its inaugural conference where memorandums of understanding were signed with representatives from Portugal, Brazil, São Tome and Principe, Cape Verde and Mozambique
- NARIT, the host of the **South-East Asian ROAD**, co-sponsored a Radio Astronomy Winter School with Korea University of Science & Technology and Graduate University for Advance Studies
- **South West Asia ROAD** is joined by Kazakhstan and Tajikistan after an official visit to these countries. SWA ROAD is renamed as South West and Central Asian ROAD
- **Southern African ROAD** ran five online training sessions on quality lighting. A pilot program is being rolled out to two schools in Zambia
- **West African ROAD** trained postgraduate students on how to use CASA Software for Radio Astronomy research. And participated in the celebration of world asteroid day on June 30.

MEETINGS AND VISITORS

- The South African National Assembly passed a motion of congratulations noting the award of the Edinburgh medal to Kevin Govender and the IAU
- The OAD hosted a visit by a Dutch group (Marc Klein Wolt, Heino Falcke, Marieke Baan, and Eelco Keij) to discuss the potential developmental aspects of the African Millimetre Telescope.
- Govender met with senior officials (Robert Massey and Pamela Mortimer) at the Royal Astronomical Society (RAS) in London to discuss the expansion of the RAS-OAD grants.
- Richard Atkinson from the British High Commission visited the OAD to discuss a potential project on the preservation of the historical aspects of astronomy in South Africa.
- Govender visited Ian Corbett (previous IAU General Secretary and co-founder of IAU Strategic Plan) and Ian Robson (ex-Chair of OAD Task Force 3) during a trip to the UK for the Edinburgh Science Festival.
- Govender presented the OAD's activities to the Institute of Physics at a meeting at their offices in London.
- Pradish Rampersadh and Gerda Botha from the South African Council for Natural Science Professionals (SACNASP) visited the OAD to discuss potential collaborations.

- The OAD was mentioned during the Science and Technology Budget Vote 2016, at the South African Parliament in Cape Town.
- Govender presented a plenary talk at the International Virtual Observatory Alliance (IVOA) Northern spring Interoperability meeting in Stellenbosch.
- Eli Grant attended the Communicating Astronomy with the Public (CAP) conference in Colombia. During that meeting she delivered a plenary talk on the OAD, a workshop on behavioural insights, and moderated a panel discussion on volunteer management, and a session on outreach innovation.
- Makola, Grant and Venugopal attended a Science Communication Workshop by Dr Eric Jensen at the University of Stellenbosch.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Global Hands-On Universe (GHO2016) conference and Galileo Teacher Training Program (GTTP) international workshop

Aug 22 - 27, 2016, Stord, Norway

<http://handsonuniverse.org/ghou2016/second-announcement/>

XV Latin American Regional IAU Meeting (LARIM)

October 3-7, 2016, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

<http://larim.unal.edu.co/>

Workshop on Astronomy beyond the common senses for accessibility and inclusion

Oct 08 2016, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

<http://wai.unal.edu.co/information/>

Space Education International Workshop 2016

Oct 18-22, 2016, Leiden, Netherlands

<http://www.space-awareness.org/en/news/space-education-international-workshop/>



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