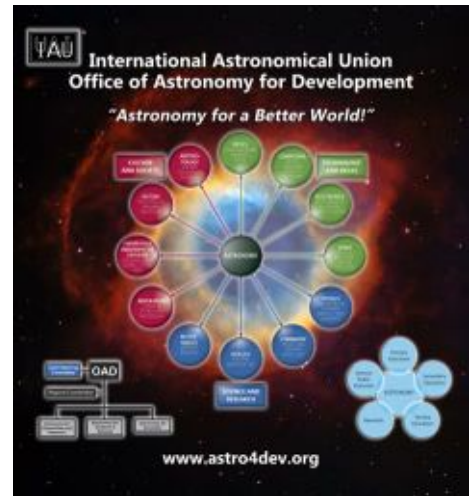


Office of Astronomy for Development

International Astronomical Union

South African Astronomical Observatory, Cape Town, SA

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Important Announcement

The Call for Proposals 2013 for projects to be implemented in the 2014 calendar year opened on July 1st, 2013 at www.astro4dev.org/cfp/.

Proposals should be submitted online to one of the following task forces (TF) : [Astronomy for Universities & Research](#) (TF1), [Astronomy for Children & Schools](#) (TF2) and [Astronomy for the Public](#) (TF3).

The call will close at **midnight UTC on August 31st, 2013**. Proposals will be reviewed by the relevant OAD Task Force and all applicants will receive feedback in December 2013. **Read more in this newsletter.** Please direct enquiries regarding the Call for Proposals to info@astro4dev.org.

News & Updates from the OAD

Funded Projects for 2013

During this quarter (April to June 2013) the IAU Office of Astronomy for Development continued its interactions with the 18 projects worldwide, selected in 2012 for implementation in the year 2013. Project reports and updates are regularly posted on the [OAD website](#).

The OAD is pleased to announce that two more projects reached completion during this term, in Nepal and Rwanda respectively. The "[National Workshop on Astronomy and Astrophysics 2013](#)" took place in Kathmandu, Nepal. It was

Astronomy for a better world!

The [International Astronomical Union](#) (IAU) adopted a [strategic plan](#) in 2009 that aims to realize the global developmental benefits of astronomy.

In order to implement this plan, the IAU established the [Office of Astronomy for Development](#) (OAD). It is hosted at the [South African Astronomical Observatory](#) (SAAO) in Cape Town, South Africa.

The OAD is a global coordinating centre for "astronomy-for-development" activities. The three major focus areas are Task Force 1: [Astronomy for Universities and Research](#); Task Force 2: [Astronomy for Children and Schools](#); and Task Force 3: [Astronomy for the Public](#).

organised by [Prof. Binil Aryal](#) from June 25th – 28th at the [Central Department of Physics of Tribhuvan University](#). About 100 students were provided with an exposure to virtual observatories, databases, software & programming languages commonly used in astrophysical research. Feedback received by email from the participants was overwhelmingly positive. The [full report](#) is now accessible online and [pictures & videos](#) can be viewed on the [OAD webpage for the project](#).



Prof. Binil Aryal

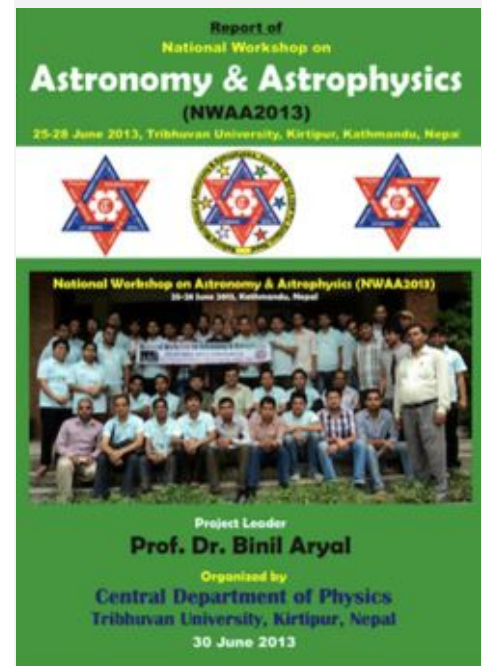


Dr. Binil Aryal is a Professor at the [Central Department of Physics, Tribhuvan University](#) in Kathmandu, Nepal. He is one of the actively working astrophysicists of Nepal.

[The National Workshop on Astronomy and Astrophysics](#)

25th - 28th June, 2013, Kathmandu, Nepal

Read the full report on the [OAD website](#).



The TFI project "[Strengthening Astronomy Research at the University level in Rwanda](#)" led by [Dr. Pheneas Nkundabakura](#) in Rwanda saw the successful completion of a [workshop on optical data reduction](#) (photometry and spectroscopy) at the Kigali Institute of Education from May 5th – 11th, 2013. [South African Astronomical Observatory](#) researcher and [SALT](#) astronomer [Dr. Petri Vaisanen](#) was one of two facilitators for this workshop:

"The workshop was held some 100 km north of Kigali, in a beautiful, lush volcano range region hosting the famous mountain gorillas – alas, the week-long workshop was too busy for us to venture in the park. The majority of the dozen participants were Pheneas' former astronomy students, who now worked as high-school math/science teachers, since his institute does not currently have graduate research programs. These students were, however, very dedicated to learn professional astronomy and attempt research on their 'free time' while possibly looking for options for bursaries abroad. After two days of lectures we split into hands-on tracks: Dr. Mirjana Povic from Granada, Spain, ran a photometry workshop while I taught spectroscopy. For some students merely learning Linux was a new important skill acquired while others learned to independently reduce real SALT spectroscopic data-sets, start scientific analysis, and search for and analyse large data-sets from astronomical data archives.

Dr. Petri Vaisanen"

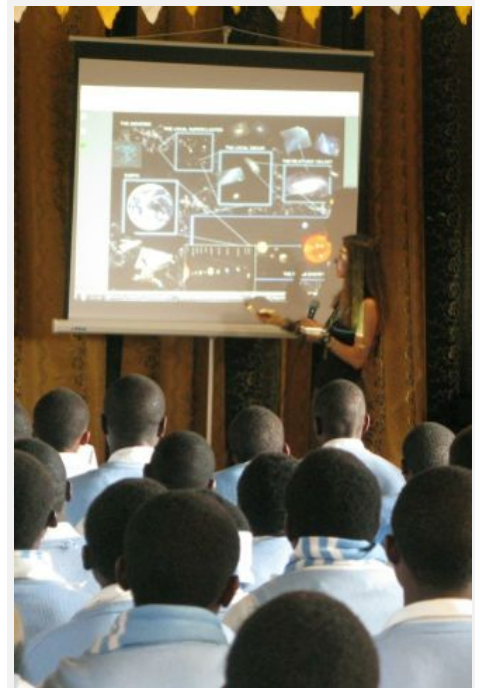
Call for Proposals 2013 for projects in 2014

The Call for Proposals for projects to be implemented in 2014 was developed during this quarter and released online on July 1st, 2013 with input from the different Task Forces. The online system now allows for electronic submissions and automatic confirmations, with email redundancy in addition to database storage to eliminate any risk of data loss. This new system addresses lessons from the previous Call for Proposals and represents a significant upgrade to the proposal system. The new deadline for the call is **midnight UTC on 31 August 2013**, which is earlier than the previous one to allow more time for



Dr. Pheneas Nkundabakura

[Dr. Pheneas Nkundabakura](#) is a lecturer of Physics at Kigali Institute of Education, Rwanda. He received his BSc in Physics at the National University of Rwanda (Rwanda), BSc (Hons) & MSc in Astrophysics as part of the [National Astrophysics and Space science program](#) (NASSP) in South Africa and his PhD in Astrophysics from the [University of Free State](#) (South Africa).



[Dr. Mirjana Povic](#) lecturing during the [workshop](#) in Kigali.

evaluation and feedback. For more information, please visit www.astro4dev.org/cfp/. We are eager to read your proposals!

International & Domestic events

There was one international trip during this quarter by the OAD Director to Europe. During this trip he attended a [conference in the Netherlands](#) in honour of [George Miley](#). The conference was well attended by several high profile people including [Lord Martin Rees](#) and several heads of international astronomical institutions, who heard a presentation about the OAD and its activities.

The OAD Director also attended the [Africa-European Radio Astronomy Platform](#) (AERAP) in Brussels that was part of an ongoing high-level effort to build partnerships in astronomy between Europe and Africa. The OAD's main contributions were in the themes of Human Capital Development, Astronomy as a tool for Science Education, and Public Outreach. This platform will be a good model to learn from and build upon in other regions around the world.

Domestic events included: (i) a presentation by the OAD at a high level event in Johannesburg celebrating Africa Day; (ii) a presentation about the OAD at the South African [National Research Foundation](#) headquarters in Pretoria delivered jointly by the OAD Director and OAD Project Officer: South African [Department of Science & Technology](#) officials were also invited to this presentation which is meant to be part of a series of regular updates by the OAD to its funders; (iii) the OAD attended a round-table meeting in Pretoria with the [International Council for Science](#) (ICSU) president [Prof Yuan Tseh Lee](#) where it had the opportunity to engage with other ICSU bodies about "science for development". Following this meeting the OAD was invited to develop a cross-disciplinary pilot project involving as many ICSU

Upcoming Events

July 8th – 12th

South African Institute of Physics conference, Richards Bay, SA

July 15th – 17th

Workshop UniZulu, Richards Bay, SA

August 1st – 2nd

Astronomy Town meeting, Cape Town, SA

August 19th – 24th

5th Arab Youth Forum on Astronomy and Space Sciences, Gaza, Palestine

Past events

April 16th

Parliamentary visit to the SAAO, organized by OAD

May 7th – 10th

IAU Executive Committee, Tokyo, Japan

May 23rd – 24th

Africa Day, Johannesburg, SA

June 10th – 14th

George Miley conference, Leiden, the Netherlands

June 18th – 19th

AERAP meeting, Brussels, Belgium

June 26th

ICSU meeting, Johannesburg, SA

bodies as possible, with a focus on the common thread of school level science education.

Important meetings

The [IAU Executive Committee](#) held its meeting in Japan from 8th to 10th April 2013. The OAD joined the meeting via Skype to discuss its activities and progress.

On 16th April 2013 the OAD, together with the [South African Astronomical Observatory](#) (SAAO), hosted the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee (PPC) on Science and Technology at the [SAAO](#) headquarters in Cape Town. The visit came about following various interactions between [George Miley](#) (chair of the [Extended Development Oversight Committee](#) - EDOC), [Kevin Govender](#) (Director of the OAD) and [Eugene Ngcobo](#) (Chair of the PPC). The event focused on "Astronomy for Development" and highlighted the [SAAO](#) activities in terms of education, outreach and community development as well as the work of the OAD in terms of international projects.

Current highlights from OAD interns

The OAD is currently hosting three interns: [Laure Catala](#), [Eli Kasai](#) and [Rajin Ramphul](#).

[Laure Catala](#) is preparing an astronomy [workshop](#) as a side event to the [South African Institute of Physics conference](#) at the University of Zululand, using astronomy instruments to enhance Physics teaching.

[Eli Kasai](#) has implemented the use of educational videos in Sutherland and is now working on Task Force 2's [AstroPack](#) (consolidating educational materials from around the world) as

OAD interns news

Rajin Ramphul



[Rajin Ramphul](#) recently joined the OAD. He is a Mauritian student doing his PhD in Astrophysics at the [South African Astronomical Observatory](#) and with the [University of Cape Town](#). He is working in the field of Galaxy formation and evolution. Rajin is enthusiastic about anything that deals with teaching science as well as topics related to computing. Contact Rajin at: mrajin250@yahoo.com

Maya Barlev



[Maya Barlev](#) has recently been featured in an article from the [Washington Post](#) as well as on the [Astronomers Without Borders](#) (AWB) website. She recently left the OAD to continue her astronomy education journey around the world. Read more about her project on [her blog](#)!

well as the local production of the [Universe Awareness](#) (UNAWE) “Universe in a Box” resource package.

Our newest intern [Rajin Ramphul](#) (see biography insert on page 5) is developing a [Python programming workshop](#) which will be presented to senior students from a variety of science disciplines in order to explore how this programming tool, which is used so well in astronomy, could help tackle problems in other disciplines.

Regional Nodes & Language Expertise Centres

During this quarter the IAU's [EDOC](#) approved the establishment of a regional node in Ethiopia to focus on the East African region. A draft agreement has been developed by the OAD and circulated to the Ethiopian proposers. This is currently going through the relevant local structures and it is expected that an agreement will be signed soon.

The OAD has also been working on an instruction by the [EDOC](#) to follow up on strong proposals from Nigeria and Armenia in order to develop their respective regional communities with the intention of eventually establishing nodes, once the support of the region is obtained. If you are from, or have contacts in, regions surrounding Nigeria or Armenia, please get in touch with us to help with the process.

Efforts towards the development of a proposal for the Andean region in Latin America are also ongoing with several exchanges taking place during this quarter. [Cecilia Scorza](#), a Venezuelan-born astronomer now based in at the [House of Astronomy](#) in Germany, has been assisting the OAD in this regard. We look forward to working closely with the very energetic and motivated champions in this region towards the establishment of a node there.

The IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach: Update



The OAD is sorry to report that [Sarah Reed](#) has recently resigned from her position as **IAU International Outreach Coordinator**. Here is her message to the community:

“I would like to take this opportunity to announce that I have now left the OAO, for personal reasons. The OAO will continue, and a new coordinator will be appointed in due course. It has been a wonderful experience to help establish this new IAU office, and I look forward to seeing the office continue to grow. [...] I will continue to contribute to the IAU's outreach and development efforts via my roles within IAU Commission 55, and the OAD's Task Force 3. I would like to thank everyone who has supported me in setting up the OAO”

For more information, visit:
<http://www.iau.org/public>

Communication

The OAD hosted two “community meetings” at its offices during this quarter – one for the education/outreach community and one for the post-doctoral/post-graduate researchers. The purpose of these meetings is to bring together people who work within the close vicinity of the OAD and engage with them about the OAD's work. In this way the OAD benefits from relevant skills and experience in its local neighbourhood while building relations that could be very valuable in the long term.

During this quarter the OAD was invited to an event called “[Talking Heads](#)” which brings together various people in leadership roles from across South Africa to engage with the public in conversation about their areas of specialisation. This is a highly publicised event organised by the Africa Centre and provided a high level platform for the OAD to promote its work. Another opportunity to publicise the OAD came in the form of an interview with [Peter Cox](#) from [Voice of America](#). The outcome of that interview has been unexpectedly far reaching including an [article on Voice of America](#) and recently a [translation of that interview into Amharic](#) for Ethiopian audiences.

The OAD Project Officer, [J.C. Mauduit](#), gave a colloquium to the local astronomy community to update them on the progress of the office and projects being implemented in 2013.

Follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/astro4dev and on Twitter under [@astro4dev](https://twitter.com/astro4dev). Help us grow our online community and spread the word!

Other activities in brief

The OAD participated in an educational filmmaking project in an advisory role. The film, entitled “My room at the Centre of the Universe” (watch the extended trailer [here](#)) sees collaboration between artists, astronomers and archaeologists and revolves

Social media and online presence

The OAD is on **Facebook** and **Twitter**:



facebook.com/astro4dev



twitter.com/astro4dev

Have a look at www.astro4dev.org for the latest on the OAD!

Communication from the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach is currently coordinated by the OAD until a new IAU International Outreach Coordinator is appointed. The position will be advertised soon. During the interim period, the OAO's activities such as the monthly outreach newsletter will be coordinated by the OAD. If you have items you wish to include in future OAO newsletters please send a short paragraph with a link to info@astro4dev.org.

Follow the OAO on **Twitter**:



twitter.com/IAU_Outreach

around a young boy in Sutherland who is exploring these fields. This film has already gained [international attention](#) and will be released by the end of 2013 along with an educational resource that can be used by school teachers.

International visitors to the OAD included [William Garnier](#) and [Kai Staats](#). William was recently appointed as Chief Communications Officer of the [International Square Kilometre Array Organisation](#). The purpose of the visit was for us to learn about each others' work and explore ways in which we could coordinate activities especially in terms of education and public outreach. [Kai Staats](#) was referred to the OAD by [George Miley](#) and [Pedro Russo](#) – he is a film-maker who was looking at various astronomy projects to highlight in short films. Kai has recently released a [film](#) about a [project supported by the OAD in Tanzania](#) and has also helped the OAD with short professional video clips that can be used for publicity.

In exploring new ways of using astronomy and astronomy technology for development the OAD hosted a “*Raspberry Pi Hack Session*” at its offices where technology-related staff at [SAAO](#) were invited to work on educational applications of the [Raspberry Pi](#) (the “RPI” is a small computer, slightly larger than a credit card, which runs Linux and can be used on an average television set). The modest cost of the RPi (~R450) opens up opportunities to providing access to computers in remote/under-resourced areas. The outcome of the workshop was the development of a useable setup for a teacher or learner to access educational content via this device, as well as the establishment of a wiki page which could be used to continue developing educational materials, especially astronomy education tools, for this device.

Partners of the OAD

The OAD is always open to partnerships with other organisations wishing to be proactive in the area of science for development. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

The OAD has built valuable partnerships with various organisations around the world, please visit the OAD website to find out more about opportunities you can access through these partnerships:



[ICTP: OAD Global Partner](#)



[NWO-OAD Visiting Experts](#)



[RAS-OAD Visiting Experts](#)



[UCLan scholarships](#)



[IUCAA hosting](#)

If your organisation wishes to partner with the OAD, [contact us!](#)