

Office of Astronomy for Development

International Astronomical Union

South African Astronomical Observatory, Cape Town, SA

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2013 Call for Proposals in brief

Call released: 1 July 2013

Call closed: 31 August 2013

Total number of proposals: 230

Proposals per Task Force: TF1=54; TF2=113; TF3=63

Translations: Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Chinese and French

Evaluations by Task Forces: 31 October 2013

Approval by IAU EDOC: 30 November 2013

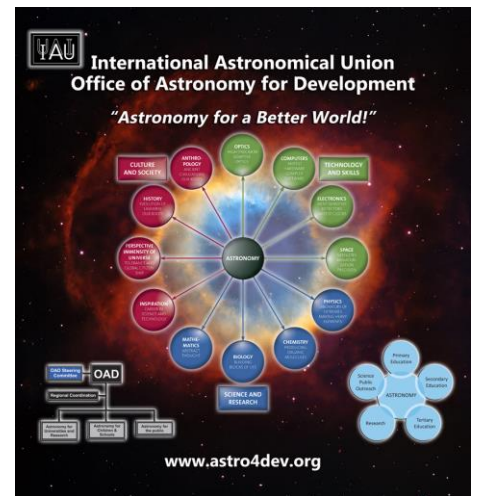
Proposers informed and grant agreements drafted: 31 December 2013

Implementation: 2014 calendar year

News & Updates from the OAD

Funded Projects for 2013

During this quarter (July to September 2013) the OAD completed the last two remaining grant agreements and payments. All 18 projects selected for funding have received their allocated grants. As of 1st October 2013, 4 of the 18 projects had reached completion and the rest are well under way. Unfortunately one project (Astronomy regional summer school in Lebanon) had to be postponed due to security risks in the region. A mid-term report was submitted to the Task Forces based on feedback from all projects.



Astronomy for a better world!

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

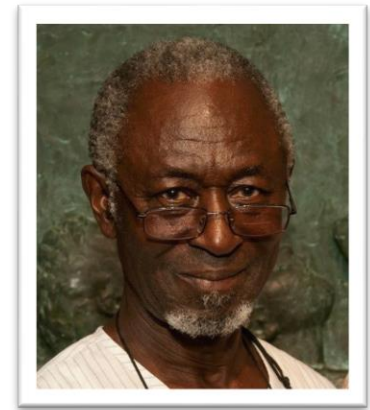
In order to implement this plan, the IAU established the [Office of Astronomy for Development](#) (OAD). It is hosted at the [South African Astronomical Observatory](#) (SAAO) in Cape Town, South Africa.

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](#).

Updates on each of the projects can be found at any time on the OAD website (www.astro4dev.org/funded-projects/), and various updates and news can also be found on Facebook at facebook.com/astro4dev and on Twitter under [@astro4dev](https://twitter.com/astro4dev).

In order to better quantify the impact of OAD funded projects, discussions also began with the Institute for Monitoring & Evaluation at the University of Cape Town (www.uct.ac.za/) to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Featured Project: Our featured project for this newsletter is the "[Astronomy lectures for university students and teachers in Ghana](#)" project. It was organised by [Dr. Jacob Ashong](#) from August 25th to 28th at the Accra Planetarium. The 5-day astronomy workshop brought international astronomy educators together with Ghanaian students, lecturers and teachers. Visiting lecturers included [Katrien Kolenberg](#) (USA), [Bonaventure Okere](#) (Nigeria) and [David Weinrich](#) (USA). Feedback from participants showed that the workshop was successful in increasing the astronomy knowledge of the participants, in inspiring greater enthusiasm for astronomy, and in enlightening them about how astronomy and space science research has led to technological innovations that we all benefit from in everyday life. Below are a few pictures taken during the workshop.



Dr. Jacob Ashong

Born in Ghana, Jacob travelled to the UK in 1960 and completed his education while also working to support himself. He spent part of his working life in the UK and part at the Department of Biochemistry of the University of Ghana. His PhD from London University was in the Biochemistry of Malaria treatment.

After retiring from university life, Dr Ashong started working on the realization of a dream going back forty years to build a planetarium and science centre in Ghana.



Call for Proposals 2013

The Call for Proposals for projects to be implemented in 2014 was completed during this quarter, opening on 1 July 2013 and closing on 31 August 2013. Translations were provided in Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Chinese and French. In total the OAD received 230 proposals from around the world: the map below shows the geographical spread in terms of where the proposals came from.

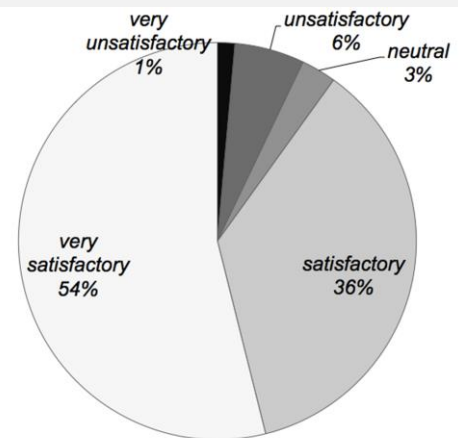


In early September proposals were consolidated in the OAD database and sent to the various Task Forces (www.astro4dev.org/task-forces/) for evaluation. There was a general increase in demand by about 20% from the previous year. Projects recommended but not funded will go onto a wish list for which the OAD will continue to look for support. Recommendations from the Task Forces are due to reach the OAD by 31 October 2013 and detailed feedback from the evaluators will be included in this year's evaluations. The proposals are then to be sent to the IAU OAD Extended Development Oversight Committee (EDOC, for more information see www.astro4dev.org/aboutiauoad/oversight/)

The online Call for Proposals 2013

This year, the 2013 Call for Proposals was offered entirely online, as forms to be filled in and submitted automatically. The system performed well, with only minimal issues identified.

At the end of the online submission process, a feedback form was made available to every submitter to rate the overall experience: 90% rated the online submission system either as "very satisfactory" or "satisfactory", as can be seen from the figure below:



Pie diagram showing the results of the feedback form

A box for comments also allowed for more detailed reviews, which will be useful to the OAD in order to address the cases of lower ratings, in time for the next Call for Proposals (to open in July 2014).

For more information or any additional feedback, please contact the OAD team at info@astro4dev.org

Read more about the general Call for Proposal and its process at www.astro4dev.org/aboutiauoad/cfp/

for final approval. All applicants will be notified of the results during December 2013.

International & Domestic events

There was one international trip during this quarter by the OAD Director, [Kevin Govender](#), to the United States. During this trip he attended the “dot-astronomy” conference in Boston; delivered presentations at Harvard-Smithsonian Centre for Astrophysics, the National Radio Astronomy Observatory and the US State Department; and conducted meetings with several key stakeholders including the American Astronomical Society, the Space Telescope Science Institute, NASA, Associated Universities Incorporated, Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy, USAID, National Science Foundation, American Institute of Physics, National Society of Black Physicists, National Academies of Science, and Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. The purpose of the visit was to introduce the OAD to key stakeholders, explore possible collaborations and determine the best way to engage with the US science and development communities.

Domestic trips and events included the following: (i) South African Institute of Physics Conference in Richards Bay by OAD intern [Laure Catala](#) and OAD Project Officer [Jean-Christophe Mauduit](#); (ii) astronomy workshop at the University of Zululand; (iii) astronomy town meeting in Cape Town; (iv) meeting with the South African USAID mission in Pretoria; (v) hosting of Swiss delegation in Sutherland; (vi) several meetings regarding the development of a long term strategy for South African astronomy; (vii) meeting with [Deborah Stokes](#) from the Smithsonian Museum of African Art; (viii) meeting with the physical science curriculum advisors at the Western Cape Department of Education to explore astronomy resources for

Upcoming Events

October 7th – 11th

UNAWWE International Workshop, Germany

October 14th – 18th

CAP2013, Poland

October 21th – 25th

Astronomy summer school for West Africa, Nigeria

Oct 28th – Nov 4th

São Tomé & Príncipe, Workshop, Gabon & OAD francophone Workshop

November 25th – 29th

Latin American Regional IAU Meeting, Brazil

January 23rd – 28th

OAD Steering Committee and Task Force Chairs meetings

Past events

July 8th – 12th

SAIP Conference, SA

July 15th – 17th

Unizul workshop, SA

August 1st – 2nd

Astronomy Town meeting, Cape Town, SA

September 2nd – 4th

OAD Python workshop

September 16th – 29th

Dot-astronomy Conference, USA

science education; (ix) evening reception in Cape Town hosted by the US consulate; (x) evening reception in Cape Town hosted by the Swiss Embassy.

Important meetings

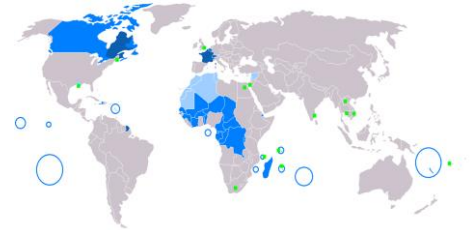
Special visitors to the OAD included [Tim de Zeeuw](#) (Director General of the European Southern Observatory) and [Robert-Jan Smits](#) (EU Director-General for Research and Innovation). This was part of their visit to South Africa and the opportunity was used to inform them about the activities of the OAD and explore potential collaborations.

Other visitors to the OAD included (i) [Henry Throop](#) from the Planetary Science Institute; (ii) [Stefan Dreizler](#) and 12 students from the Institut fuer Astrophysik, Georg-August-Universitaet Goettingen; (iii) [Courtney Matson](#) and the USAID team from Washington DC; (iv) [Michelle Willmers](#) and delegates of the Open Science for Development conference (v) [Edward Jurua](#) and [Simon Anguma](#) from Mbarara University in Uganda (vi) [Derek Fish](#) from the Unizul Science Centre.

In July the OAD, together with the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO, www.saa0.ac.za/), hosted a group of Mathematics students from École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL, www.epfl.ch/), in Switzerland. These students were travelling around South Africa performing Mathematics outreach workshops at several schools. This very interesting model clearly benefited both the Swiss students as well as the schools they visited. The event was strongly endorsed by the Swiss Embassy who hosted an evening reception and arranged for the Embassy staff to visit the students during their activities in Sutherland (a rural town near the SAAO telescope site).

OAD Francophone workshop

Atelier francophone de l'OAD



Geographical spread of the French language around the world (Wikipedia)

Following the 3rd November 2013 total solar eclipse and the astronomy workshop happening in Gabon, the OAD is gathering representatives of francophone countries in Libreville on the 4th & 5th of November to discuss the potential establishment of a worldwide French language expertise center for the OAD (LOAD).

A la suite de l'éclipse de Soleil totale du 3 Novembre 2013, l'OAD organise un atelier de discussion, en Français, le 4 & 5 Novembre 2013, à Libreville au Gabon. Cet atelier a pour but de rassembler les représentants de pays potentiellement intéressés par l'établissement d'un noeud francophone mondial pour l'OAD.

Email info@astro4dev.org to be included on the French-speaking OAD mailing list. For more information, visit:

Envoyez un email à info@astro4dev.org pour vous inscrire à la liste de diffusion en Français de l'OAD. Pour plus d'informations:

www.astro4dev.org/oad-workshop-french/

Highlights from OAD interns

Laure Catala and the OAD Project Officer organized a workshop at the University of Zululand (www.unizulu.ac.za/) as a side event to the South African Institute of Physics Conference. The workshop was meant as a follow up to the Astronomy Teaching and Research Orientation Workshop ([ASTROW](#)) held at the OAD in October 2012. The purpose of such workshops is to introduce basic astronomy instrumentation and data analysis techniques to Physics lecturers and students in order to enhance the teaching of Physics at universities. The event has led to several follow up actions including a proposal by the university to purchase its own telescope and a proposal for funding to expand the project to 4 other universities around South Africa. This type of workshop serves as an excellent model that can be applied to Physics departments at universities around the world. More information can be found at: www.astro4dev.org/activities/astrovarsity/.

Eli Kasai has initiated Task Force 2's AstroPack (consolidating educational materials from around the world) as well as researched the local production of UNawe's Universe in a Box resource package (www.unawe.org/resources/universebox/). Eli left the OAD in August due to study commitments.

Rajin Ramphul implemented a Python programming workshop in September and is consolidating the materials online such that similar workshops can easily be implemented elsewhere. The workshop targeted non-astronomy university students. The objective was to explore the potential application of tools used within astronomy to fields outside of astronomy. Amongst the 15 attendees the fields of Chemistry, Computer Science, Physics and Statistics were represented. The feedback from the 3-day

Workshop “Teaching astronomy to undergraduates”: feedback



Workshop group picture

A letter to the IAU, from [Bonginkosi Deysel Zwane](#), Physics student at the University of Zululand, South Africa

« I was quite impressed by the IAU Workshop held at The University Of Zululand on the 15th to 17th of July 2013. This was my first time attending an Astronomy based event [...]. Since 7th grade, I have been fascinated by the stars in the night sky, so I set on studying more about the Universe on my own with the help of encyclopedia books and other publications, but as the time went by, it seemed as if people had less interest in space physics or astronomy, which is why I chose BSc Applied Math and Physics as a course after matriculation. [...] And BOOM! came the IAU workshop, they gave light to my flame which was beginning to die due to lack of support [...]. I actually didn't want that workshop to end [...]. The three days we spent with the IAU group felt like few minutes to me. I would actually like to form an Astronomy Club or Astrophysics Club which will reach out from the University to the community and high schools. »

workshop was extremely positive and there were unanimous calls for a follow-up workshop.

Regional Nodes & Language Expertise Centres

Progress on regional nodes: During this quarter exchanges have been ongoing with the following potential hosts of regional nodes: Armenia and Poland for Eastern Europe; Nigeria and Ghana for parts of West Africa; Gabon for Francophone countries; Colombia, Venezuela, Chile for the Andean region; and Zambia for the Southern African region. In each of these cases the respective region has, as much as possible, been notified of the potential establishment of a node in order to gain support and establish the necessary partnerships. The Ethiopian node for the East African region has been approved and an agreement will soon be signed. The East Asian and South East Asian nodes have been quite active in various ways. Discussions took place regarding websites and publicising of activities. It is expected that these websites will come online very soon.

Communication

Publicity/Talks: In South Africa the activities of the OAD were presented at the South African Institute of Physics conference, the Astronomy Town Meeting and seminars at the Universities of Western Cape and Cape Town. Internationally, the OAD activities were presented at various venues in the United States (see above). A video message on the OAD was produced and sent to China for one of the OAD funded projects. Several interviews were also conducted with [Meera Senthilingam](#), a journalist preparing a pitch for the BBC regarding astronomy for development. The OAD flyer was translated into French and sent to Algeria. An article was submitted by the OAD to the South African Institute of Physics newsletter.

Calling for input for TF2 “Astronomy for Children and Schools” Global Projects

AstroPack



The OAD intends to gather existing astronomical resources for distribution around the world. To make this a reality, we appeal to potential donors for any astronomical resources you may be able to contribute. We also ask for those involved in educational and outreach activities to use this channel to request resources for your programmes.

www.astro4dev.org/astropack

AstroEDU

ASTROEDU

AstroEDU is a peer review platform for educational activities. People submit their activities in a standard format. The astroEDU team then has these peer-reviewed by at least two people: one professional research scientist and one professional educator.

This project is currently in a testing phase and we need you to participate by submitting your activities and helping us strengthen the project with your suggestions.

Please spread the word!

www.iau.org/astroedu