




# IAU OFFICE OF ASTRONOMY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Newsletter #23, Oct - Dec 2018

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## 1. Results of Annual Call for Proposals: Astronomy For Development

The OAD is pleased to announce the results of its 2018 annual call for proposals. Twenty projects will receive funding from the IAU in 2019 to address challenges using astronomy-related interventions. Projects funded include a school program in India that will use astronomy to dispel potentially harmful superstition; education programs using astronomy to inspire and educate refugee populations in Algeria and Nigeria; development of a mobile tactile dome and a tactile 'umbrella-planetarium' for visually impaired audiences in Phillipines, Malaysia and Indonesia; astronomy teacher training in Liberia and Mongolia to improve education outcomes; a mentorship program for women in physics/astronomy in developing countries.

The next call for proposals will be announced around April 2019.

List of [Funded Projects](#)

## 2. RAS-OAD grant: applications open

Applications are open for the Royal Astronomical Society RAS-OAD grant which provides mobility funding to establish or nurture research, educational and/or development related collaborations between the United Kingdom (UK) and countries where astronomy research is not well established. Scientists, engineers or educators either based in the UK, or who will travel to the UK can apply for this grant.

Deadline: 28 February 2019

[Apply for RAS-OAD grant](#)

### 3. OAD Project Wins Science Engagement Award

Francesca Fragkoudi, PI of Columba Hypatia: Astronomy for Peace was one of two winners of Falling Walls Engage 2018, an international platform for all forms of science engagement, hosted by Falling Walls in cooperation with Robert Bosch Stiftung. Columba Hypatia is an outreach project conducted by GalileoMobile and the Association for Historical Dialogue & Research on the island of Cyprus. It used astronomy as a tool for promoting meaningful communication and a culture of peace and non-violence.

Video of Francesca's presentation at Falling Walls



*image credits: Falling Walls Engage*

### 4. #IAU100 opportunities

In 2019, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) is celebrating its 100th anniversary. To commemorate this milestone, the IAU is organising a year-long celebration to increase awareness of a century of astronomical discoveries as well as to support and improve the use of astronomy as a tool for education, development and diplomacy under the central theme "Under One Sky". The celebrations have kicked off with the "100 Hours of Astronomy" program in January. Throughout the year, a number of special events are being organized providing opportunities for the community to come together and celebrate.

More information on the [website](#).

Follow IAU100 news on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#).

## 5. Regional Offices: Updates

OAD has 10 Regional Offices which share the vision of the OAD but with a regional focus. "Regions" which they focus on could be geographical (neighbouring countries) or cultural (language or cultural similarities spread over a large geographic region). These regional offices carry out various activities to disseminate astronomy knowledge, build human capacity, and advance research in order to use astronomy for development. Below are some of their activities in this quarter. Further information on the [website](#).

### Andean Region

- The [Third Workshop Astronomia en los Andes](#) was held November 12-16, 2018, hosted by Universidad Nacional de Ingenieria. There were around 100 attendees from countries in the Andean ROAD (Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela). The workshop consisted of 25 technical talks, lectures for undergraduate students, 3 round tables on the successes and challenges of the task forces.

### Arab World and Arabic Language Centre

- Weekly lectures were held at the JAS (Jordanian Astronomical Society) Cultural Forum in collaboration with AUASS (Arab Union for Astronomy and Space Science) under the umbrella of the Arab ROAD.
- "Rum Sky" is a new astronomy tourism project launched recently in Wadi Rum, South of Jordan, which includes JAS members.

### East Africa

- World Space Week celebrations were organized by Ethiopian Space Science and Technology Institute (ESSTI), Ethiopian Space Science Society (ESSS), and East African ROAD with more than 500 participants at an event in Addis Ababa.
- First NASE (Network for Astronomy School Education) teachers training was held in Addis Ababa, organized by East African ROAD, ESSTI, and ESSS.
- A radio astronomer from Lisbon University, Institute of Astrophysics and Manager of ALMA Center for Expertise visited Tanzania to share expertise by giving several presentations at different universities and government departments.

### East Asia

- A science development mission was conducted in remote, rural regions of Mongolia, focused on stimulating science education and interest amongst children in nomadic settlements, with astronomical outreach activities.
- Global Health and Climate Change workshop was held at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China with the goal of bridging the gap between the natural sciences (astrophysics, geoscience, meteorology) and healthcare professionals.

### Europe

- Michelle Willebrands, an intern from the European ROAD, spent 2 months at the OAD in Cape Town working on implementation plans for the new European Regional Office.
- Kick-off of Space.Eu project at the University of Leiden in December. The project aims to use the excitement of space to encourage youth to choose careers in science and technology.

## Portuguese Language Centre

- PLOAD participated in the XXVI Astronomy Week at Museum of Astronomy and Related Sciences in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. A session was held on “Chat with Brazilian and African Scientists” with participants from Brazil, Cape Verde and Mozambique.
- The World Science Day for Peace and Development was celebrated on November 10 with astronomy hands-on activities for more than 100 students in Cape Verde.
- Dulcelena Semedo defended her postgraduate thesis in Brazil on November 13, and is now the first teacher from Cape Verde specialized in the teaching of Astronomy. This is a success story in the collaboration between PLOAD Brazil and PLOAD Cape Verde.

## South West and Central Asia

- “Let’s feel the Cosmos” project won a grant from the Awesome Foundation in Armenia, Yerevan. The project is carried out by children from a school astronomy club, with the support of Armine Patatanyan from SWCA ROAD. The team is preparing tactile materials to teach astronomy to visually impaired and blind children.
- Public lectures were given on “Relation of Astronomy to other Sciences” and “Our Understanding of the Universe” by Areg Mickaelian from SWCA ROAD.

## South East Asia

- Thailand-UK Python+Astronomy Summer School 2018 (ThaiPASS’18) was held from 7-12 October 2018 in Chiang Mai with 40 science students from Thailand.
- The 10th SEAN 2018 Meeting was held from 19 – 21 October 2018 in Indonesia with 100 researchers and students from ASEAN Countries.
- The NARIT-RUPP Human Capacity Training in Astronomy for Development 2018 was held 6 – 7 December 2018 at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), the Kingdom of Cambodia with 80 RUPP Students majoring in Physics and Geography.

## Southern Africa

- A regional Go-Lab workshop was conducted from 10-14 December 2018 on the use of online labs and resources. This was facilitated by Rosa Doran and Carlos Manuel Dos Santos. Participants were science teachers from different parts of Zambia and South Africa.
- Mauritius hosted the 2nd African Space Generation Workshop on 17-18 December 2018. This workshop brought together students, young professionals and industry representatives to examine interdisciplinary perspectives on space and scientific matters in Africa. It was organized by the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC) under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

## West Africa

- National Space Research and Development Agency-Center for Basic Space Science (NASRDA-CBSS) in collaboration with Chukwuka Cosmas Ezenma opened a research grant for African Students in Space Science and Astronomy.
- Astronomical Society of Nigeria held its annual Conference for 2018.
- A Science Communication and Astronomy Outreach Workshop was held from October 12 – 14, 2018 for a group of ten DARA students at Ghana Space Science and Technology Institute. They conducted astronomy outreach in selected schools in Accra.

## 6. Projects: Updates

Recent updates from some of the OAD funded projects.

- The Ad Astra Academy returned to Rio de Janeiro's City of God to continue the mission of inspiring young explorers to pursue their curiosity using the theme of planetary habitability. Partnering with the Instituto Presbiteriano Álvaro Reis (INPAR), the Ad Astra curriculum followed a 1-week format, culminating in a capstone project using data from NASA's Mars Science Laboratory.
- Global Himalayan Expedition (GHE) and Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) entered into a formal collaboration for the AHLC (Astronomy for Himalayan Livelihood Creation) project to leverage astro-tourism in Himalayan villages. Through this collaboration, AHLC will make use of IIA's expertise in training the locals in astronomy along with utilising IIA infrastructure in Leh for organising AHLC workshops.
- SYSTEM Sounds produced 5 sonification videos and 2 web applications. And a sound-based planetarium show, "Our Musical Universe", at the Dunlap Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics. SYSTEM Sounds is a science-art project which translates astronomical systems and data into music and sound.
- The AstroBVI project is producing tactile 3D maps of galaxies, a manual and multimedia material for educators working with blind and visually impaired students in Latin America.
- The project "A Touch of Venus" has developed a tactile globe of Venus and an accompanying book of activities. The kit will be sent to selected educators around the world. The 3D model of the globe can be downloaded from the project website.

More information on funded projects can be found at: <http://www.astro4dev.org/project-search/>



## 7. People at OAD

In addition to its staff, several other people contribute to the OAD vision and become part of our team for a few weeks to months. Below are some of the people who worked or currently working with us, either remotely or at our office in Cape Town.

- Max Molaro joined the OAD as an intern during this period. He helped develop the website for the [Astronomy in Africa regional meeting](#) in 2019. He also produced visualizations on the number of astronomers and astronomy publications in Africa.
- Jane Choi and Jelena Duza contribute as volunteers at the OAD office in Cape Town.
- Tawanda Chingozha (Development Economics PhD student) continues as an OAD Fellow, working with McBride on using the citizen science platform Zooniverse to map informality in African countries through satellite imagery.

## 8. Upcoming Events

IAU100 Women and Girls in Astronomy Month

Feb 2019

All around the world

<https://www.inclusive-astronomy.org/women-girls-in-astronomy>

Astronomy in Africa business meeting 2019

25 - 26 March 2019

Cape Town, South Africa

<http://africa.astro4dev.org/>

Space Generation Fusion Forum (SGFF)

5 - 8 April 2019

Colorado Springs, USA

<https://spacegeneration.org/sgff2019>

European Week of Astronomy and Space Science (EWASS)

24 – 28 June 2019

Lyon, France

<https://eas.unige.ch//EWASS/>

IAU100: Moon Landing 50th Anniversary - Let's All Observe the Moon!

20 July 2019

All around the world

<https://www.iau-100.org/moon-landing-anniversary>



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