



IAU OFFICE OF ASTRONOMY FOR DEVELOPMENT

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1. 2019 Annual Call for Proposals: Astronomy For Development

The OAD is pleased to announce the launch of the 2019 annual call for proposals. The call will follow the two-stage model from previous years. Applications are currently being accepted for Stage 1, open to anyone from anywhere in the world (regardless of background in astronomy). At Stage 1, proposers submit a brief application on any project idea that plans to use astronomy to promote development.

This year, proposers can choose to submit their application under the Flagship Themes:

1. Sustainable, local socio-economic development through astronomy
2. Science diplomacy through astronomy: Celebrating our common humanity

Proposals under the Flagships should serve as local pathfinders or pilot projects that can later be expanded globally.

More information on the [website](#).

2. RAS-OAD grants awarded

The OAD and Royal Astronomical Society have selected the recipients of the RAS-OAD grant. It provides mobility funding to establish or nurture research, educational and/or development related collaborations between the United Kingdom and countries where astronomy research is not well established.

Winners of the grant are Aishwannya Sharma (travel from India to UK), Clara Marie Pennock (UK to India), Tsolmon Renchin (Mongolia to UK), Dimitris Stamatellos (UK to Vietnam), and Sohan Jheeta (UK to Zambia).

More information on [RAS-OAD grant](#).

3. Astronomy in Africa meeting

In March 2019, the Astronomy in Africa Business meeting relaunched the African Astronomical Society (AfAS), a professional astronomy society for the continent. The meeting was attended by around 80 delegates from 20 countries. It was co-organized by the OAD, on behalf of its three African Regional Offices, and hosted at the South African Astronomical Observatory in Cape Town.

At the end of 2 days, a new Constitution for AfAS was adopted and an Executive Committee was elected. The South African government, through its Department of Science and Technology, who was the main sponsor of the event, agreed to host the AfAS secretariat for 3 years.



Participants of the Astronomy in Africa Business meeting in Cape Town, March 2019

4. Farewell to Dr. Wanda Diaz-Merced

At the end of March 2019, we bid a sad farewell to Dr. Wanda Diaz-Merced, upon the completion of her post-doctoral research at the OAD. She was leading the AstroSense project which is an umbrella for a number of inclusion initiatives to make astronomy and science a more level playing field for everyone. Wanda will carry on her work at the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach in Japan. She and her collaborators are also coordinating the IAU Inspiring Stars global inclusion project.

5. IAU100: updates

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”.

- Join the IAU100 Moon Landing celebrations
- Join the Global ‘Places Connected to the Sky’ Project
- IAU100 Flagship Ceremony was held at the Palace of the Academies in Brussels on 11–12 April 2019

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

6. 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](#).

Arab World and Arabic Language Centre

- Several lectures were conducted by Jordanian Astronomical Society (JAS) and The Arab Union for Astronomy and Space Science (AUASS) from Jan – Mar 2019
- United Nations / Jordan Workshop on Global Partnership in Space Exploration and Innovation was organized by the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Western Asia (RCSSTE-WA) & the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and included the inauguration of a new building in Jordan which will house the Arab ROAD/LOAD

East Africa

- East African ROAD participated in the 14th General Assembly of the Ethiopian Space Science Society (ESSS) and the 1st ESSTI African Initiative for Planetary and Space Sciences (AFIPS) International Workshop
- East African ROAD organized the Inspiring Stars Exhibition and Inclusion Workshop at Kotebe Metropolitan University (KMU) in collaboration with IAU-Inspiring Stars flagship program coordinator Dr. Wanda Diaz (OAD), KMU, ESSTI and ESSS
- East African ROAD organized and celebrated the International Day of Women and Girls in Science on 11th Feb 2019 at Addis Ababa Ethiopia, in collaboration with ESSTI and ESSS
- Meetings were held to plan for the establishment of an Optical Observatory in Kenya
- East African ROAD in collaboration with ESSTI and ESSS organized a 100 hours of Astronomy event from 11-13 Jan 2019 in Addis Ababa

East Asia

- Development of mini-telescopes for science-related educational events by Yunnan Astronomical Observatories
- Mars colony population modeling and population planning student research activities, funded by the Dubai Future Foundation, in Suzhou
- Public lectures on "The Wandering Earth" by Dr. Xiaoying Pang (Wandering Earth is a Chinese sci-fi movie hit), in Suzhou
- Solar eclipse and astronomical observatory visit by high school students and university students to Chile in July 2019, in collaboration with the Guangdong Astronomy Network

Europe

- Lobbying within the Netherlands to raise funds to employ ROAD project manager. Fund-raising was successful to support project manager for 1 year

Portuguese Language Centre

- Comment in Nature Astronomy about PLOAD published on 25th of March, 2019, "[Astronomy for development in Portuguese-speaking countries](#)".
- The IAU100 project, [Eddington @ Sundy: 100 years later](#), is celebrating the anniversary of the 1919 Solar Eclipse observations which experimentally confirmed Einstein's Theory of General Relativity
- 43 events were promoted in 3 countries (25 in Brazil, 1 in Mozambique and 17 in Portugal) for the IAU 100 Hours of Astronomy
- São Tomé and Príncipe, Cape Verde, Mozambique, East Timor and Brazil participated in the [Eratosthenes Experiment](#) in which 77 countries participated. Brazil was the country with most schools enrolled worldwide, 238 (30% of total)

South West and Central Asia

- Public lecture by Areg Mickaelian at Yerevan Phys-Math School "Astronomy in the World and in Armenia", gifting Celestron 11cm telescope to the school
- Founding of Byurakan school pupils astronomical club and 1st (introductory) lesson at Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory (BAO)
- Gohar Davtyan appointed as IAU SWCA ROAD TF3 Coordinator and Meline Asryan appointed as BAO press-secretary
- Armenian Astronomical Society School Lectures program approved by Fund for Armenian Relief and new Celestron 28cm telescope for BAO excursions from Stepan Gishyan foundation

South East Asia

- Special Talk by Sze-leung Cheung on Public Outreach Activities under OAO in Chiang Mai, Thailand
- 2nd Asian SKA Initiative on Neutron Stars (ASIONS) Meeting and SKA Workshop was held 26-30 January 2019 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, with 45 participants (mainly from Southeast Asia)
- High Optical Technology Workshop in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 24-28 March 2019 with 35 participants from Southeast Asia
- Lao-Thai Basic Astronomy Training and Stargazing was held from 1-3 April 2019 for school teachers and students at National University of Laos

West Africa

- Hosted the Ghana Dish Conversion Workshop (Jan 21-25, 2019), the first of a series of four workshops to be held in the year as being a part of the [Development Through Radio Astronomy Global Network](#) collaboration
- Undergraduate astronomy programmes started in Burkina Faso
- The 6th National Conference of Astronomical Society of Nigeria (ASN) was held last year at Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti
- Nigeria acquired a 15cm Lunt Solar Telescope for solar studies; a planetarium was opened at Afe Babalola University; and a space bus was acquired by Afe Babalola University

7. Projects: Updates

Recent updates from some of the OAD funded projects.

- Development through Astronomy in Pakistan (DAP): Team members of the DAP project founded a social enterprise called Cosmic Perspective, a sustainable platform to conduct astronomy education and outreach in Pakistan in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. The idea won first place at the Techstars Global Startup Weekend in Lahore hosted by the National Incubation Center.
- Molo Mhlaba (MM): The UN International Day of Women & Girls in Science and the IAU Women and Girls in Astronomy Day was celebrated at the Molo Mhlaba school in Cape Town. Astronomers and students from several institutions volunteered to run a day of activities with the girls at the school. NASA astronaut Ellen S. Baker visited the school and spoke to the students about her trips to space.
- SYSTEM Sounds: The project worked with NASA to convert a stunning Hubble image of a massive galaxy cluster into sound. System Sounds is a science-art outreach project that converts the rhythm and harmony of the cosmos into music and sound.
- Astronomy for all: The project developed a 3D tactile planetarium with household and low-cost materials focused on introducing the Solar System contents. The models were exhibited at the Galway Science and Technology Festival 2018, which is the largest science festival in the west of Ireland.

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



8. Upcoming Events

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>

Astronomy Education Conference: Bridging Research & Practice

16 - 18 September 2019

Garching, Germany

<http://iau-dc-c1.org/astroedu-conference/>

World Space Week

04 - 10 October 2019

All around the world

<https://www.worldspaceweek.org/>

IAUS358: Astronomy for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – a roadmap to action within the framework of IAU centennial anniversary

12 - 15 November 2019

Tokyo, Japan

<https://iau-oao.nao.ac.jp/iaus358/>



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