

Astronomy for Development in Africa: Impact, Collaboration, and Proposal Development

Since 2012, the IAU Office of Astronomy for Development (OAD) has supported community-driven projects that use astronomy to tackle local challenges and promote sustainable development worldwide. Through its annual global call for proposals, the OAD has funded 236 projects across 112 countries, with almost 35% led from Africa, spanning more than 30 African nations. These projects have demonstrated the power of astronomy as a driver for education, public engagement, community empowerment, gender inclusion in STEM, and socio-economic development.

This special session at AfAS-2026 will bring together the OAD office, African project leaders, and partners to reflect on the impact of astronomy for development initiatives across the continent. It will highlight successful African projects, explore practical lessons learned, and provide a platform for strengthening collaboration and continental networks. Importantly, the session will also include a short OAD Proposal Development Workshop to guide potential applicants through the OAD funding process, strengthen African participation, and improve the quality and sustainability of future proposals.

Programme:

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| | Co-Chairs (Charles Takalana & Joyful Mdhuli) |
| 18:00 – 18:05 | Opening and Welcome (Charles Takalana) |
| 18:05 – 18:20 | OAD Impact and Updates (Joyful Mdhuli & Charles Takalana) |
| 18:20 – 18:45 | Panel Discussion: Experiences from the Continent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Southern Africa ROAD - (Saul Phiri) - West Africa ROAD - (Timothy Egbuim) - East Africa ROAD - (TBC) - Collaborations with Botswana - South East Asia - (Matipon Tangmatitham) |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elimisha Msichana Elimisha Jamii na Astronomia (Educate a Girl Educate the entire Community with Astronomy), Kenya and Uganda - (Ann Njeri) - AstroGuides: Transforming Tours with Astrotourism (funded by Development in Africa with Radio Astronomy Project (DARA) through the UK's Science and Technologies Facilities Council) - (Onkabetse Sengate) - SciGirls -Empowering girls and female teachers through astronomy in rural areas affected by conflict - (Mirjana Povic) |
| 18:45 – 19:15 | OAD Proposal Development Mini-Workshop (Joyful Mdhuli & Charles Takalana) |
| 19:15 – 19:25 | Discussion and Q&A |
| 19:25 – 19:30 | Closing Remarks |