AfAS

African Astronomical Society

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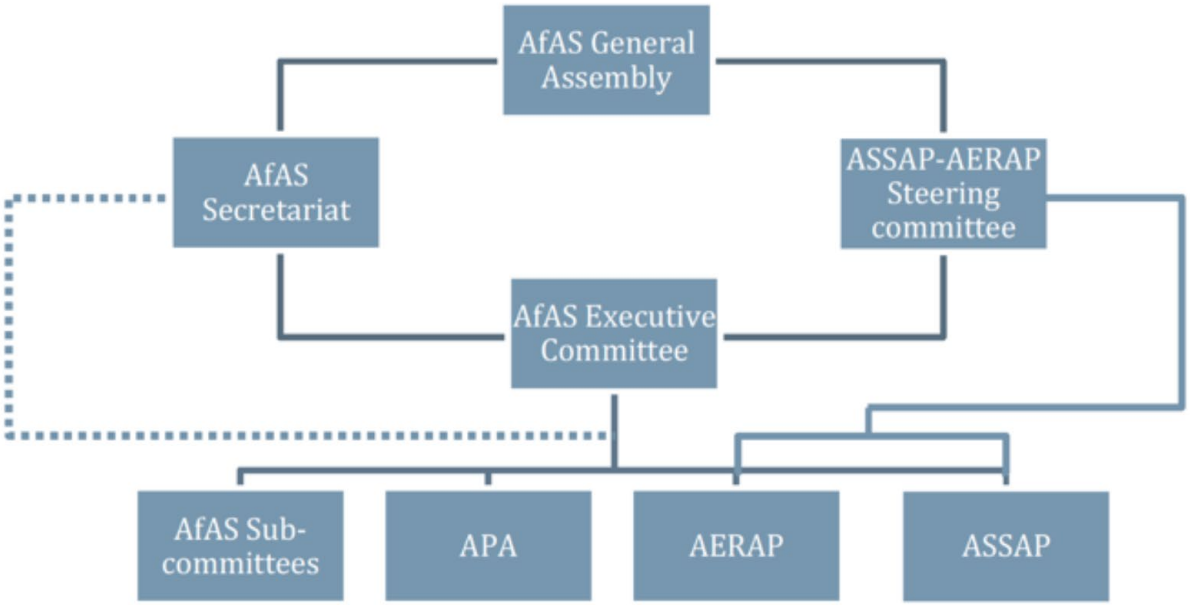
Whats Inside?

About AfAS

The African Astronomical Society (AfAS) is a Pan-African Professional Society of Astronomers, registered in South Africa, as a non-profit, voluntary society. Our vision is to create and support a globally competitive and collaborative astronomy community in Africa. Our mission is to be the voice of astronomy in Africa and to contribute to addressing the challenges faced by Africa through the promotion and advancement of astronomy.

Our key objective is to develop Astronomy and Human Capacity throughout the continent of Africa through a vibrant and active AfAS. South Africa currently hosts the Secretariat of AfAS through the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), and our office is located at the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) in Cape Town.



Our Brief History

At the 2010 launch of the African Physical Society in Dakar, astronomers from across the continent and the African diaspora resolved to form the African Astronomical Society (AfAS). Following this meeting, a whitepaper on the formation and structure of the AfAS was drafted and disseminated. An Interim Working Group was formed to conduct the formation of the AfAS at the IAU Symposium in Ouagadougou. The initial Constitution of the AfAS was agreed to and signed by the members of the Interim Working Group at Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 16 December 2010.

The interim Working Group consisted of members from Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, and the U.S.A. AfAS was officially launched at the 2nd Middle East and Africa Regional IAU Meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, in April 2011. However, AfAS had not been an active organization since its inception in 2017, and at the 4th Middle East and Africa Meeting in Ethiopia, it was decided to bring together stakeholders and relaunch AfAS. In March 2019, the Astronomy in Africa meeting was held for this purpose at the SAAO in Cape Town, South Africa. At that meeting, a revised Constitution was approved and accepted by the delegates. The AfAS Secretariat was incubated by the DSI from April 2019 to March 2020 and has been fully operational since April 2020.

Year start message from the African Astronomical Society (AfAS)

As we begin 2025, we are filled with excitement for what promises to be a landmark year for the African Astronomical Society and the broader astronomy community. Following the historic success of the IAU General Assembly in 2024, this year, we turn our focus to another big event—the AfAS General Assembly and annual conference, taking place from 23 to 28 March 2025 at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

This conference will once again bring together our community from across Africa and beyond to reflect on our progress, share research, and shape the future of astronomy on the continent. The AfAS General Assembly is not only a platform for scientific dialogue; it is a testament to the collaborative spirit that drives our work and an opportunity to amplify Africa's contributions to global science. The General Assembly will mark an important moment in AfAS's governance, as we will elect a new Executive Committee (ExCo) to guide the society through its next chapter. In addition, 2025 marks another important milestone for AfAS as we conclude the process of appointing a new Head of Secretariat. This critical step ensures that our organisation continues to be guided by strong Secretariat leadership to support the Executive Committee.

2024 reminded us of the transformative power of astronomy to unite, inspire, and drive change. In 2025, we aim to build on this foundation by continuing our commitment to grow and support a globally competitive and collaborative astronomy community and fostering partnerships that elevate Africa's role in the global scientific landscape. The upcoming AfAS General Assembly and Annual Conference will provide a platform to celebrate our achievements, address our challenges, and chart the path ahead.

We invite you all to join us this March as we gather under one vision to share knowledge, build connections, and advance our collective mission. Together, let us make 2025 a year of extraordinary progress and impact for African astronomy.

Interim Head of Secretariat
Dr Charles Takalana

Message from the Vice President of AfAS

The 32nd General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union (IAU), hosted in Cape Town, South Africa in August, was nothing short of historic. As the first-ever General Assembly (GA) to be held on African soil, this monumental event marked a significant milestone for astronomy on the continent. The GA showcased Africa's growing leadership in scientific research, outreach, and collaboration in the astronomy field; bringing together diverse voices, talents, and expertise from across the globe and shining a spotlight on the vibrant and innovative contributions of African astronomers to the global scientific community.

The African Astronomical Society (AfAS) played a pivotal role in the success of the GA. Through its unwavering support and leadership, AfAS facilitated collaborations, provided resources, and ensured that African voices were not just included but prominently featured throughout the event. By leveraging its extensive network across the continent, AfAS helped shape a GA that was diverse, impactful, and a true reflection of Africa's immense potential in astronomy, embodying the collective spirit that defined the conference. Throughout the conference, participants engaged in an array of activities that reflected the dynamic landscape of African astronomy. From delivering talks to engaging in outreach activities, the conference was not just a platform for scientific discourse between scientists but also a celebration of collaboration, education and bringing astronomy closer to the community.

A pivotal moment of the GA was the launch of the African Network of Women in Astronomy (AfNWA) book which highlights the critical role of this network in empowering African women in astronomy. The book launch symbolised the strides made in fostering gender equity in science, indicating the network's future vision which promises even greater support for women astronomers across the continent.

Finally, the GA's planned legacy projects are poised to leave a lasting impact on the broader scientific community. These initiatives are a testament to the GA's commitment to nurturing the next generation of astronomers, fostering international collaboration, and building a sustainable future for astronomy in Africa and beyond. The significance of hosting the GA in Africa extends beyond its immediate successes. It serves as a powerful statement about the continent's capability to lead in technical and scientific endeavours. This event has not only changed perceptions but has also paved the way for greater inclusion of African voices in global scientific conversations.

As you read through this edition of the AfAS Newsletter, I encourage you to reflect on the profound legacy of the GA and the collective vision it inspires. Together, let us continue to champion the advancement of astronomy in Africa, embracing our unique stories, cultures, and bold aspirations for the future.

Warm regards,

Dr Naomi Asabre Frimpong,

Vice President, African Astronomical Society (AfAS)

Shaping the Future of Astronomy: The Legacy of Africa's First IAU General Assembly

by Dr Charles Takalana

The XXXII International Astronomical Union (IAU) General Assembly (GA) was a landmark event that will leave a lasting legacy on astronomy, science, and the community. For the first time in its 105-year history, the IAU brought its triennial conference to the African continent, marking a moment not only for Africa but for the global scientific community. As the dust settles on this monumental event, attention now turns to the legacy initiatives stemming from the GA—initiatives poised to reshape perceptions of astronomy in Africa, science engagement, and collaboration.

The IAU-GA 2024 was committed to accessibility. It was the first open-access IAU GA, ensuring that anyone, anywhere, could engage with the conference. The live-streaming of sessions on YouTube and the adoption of immersive Spatial VR platforms enabled individuals across the globe to participate in real-time or access the content later. With over 20,000 YouTube views and 4,200 Spatial VR interactions, the event demonstrated how digital platforms can democratise science. This accessibility has established a long-term resource for education and research, with recorded sessions now available as open content. These materials are particularly valuable to regions where resources are scarce. By making the event globally accessible, the IAU GA 2024 set a new standard for future conferences, promoting inclusivity in astronomy and beyond.

A standout feature of the GA was the nature of its hybrid format, particularly in poster presentations. The conference poster setup bridged the gap between in-person and virtual engagement using Raspberry Pi, and smart TV screens. Participants were able to interact with poster presenters through Zoom, bringing real-time poster presentations to life. This model will serve as a blueprint for future hybrid conferences, fostering inclusivity. In a move that underscores

the conference's legacy vision, the Raspberry Pi units, screens, and other hybrid session equipment are being donated to schools and underserved communities in the host city. These donations represent a strategic investment in the community's scientific future, equipping schools to introduce learners to technology and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines and nurturing a generation capable of contributing to cutting-edge scientific endeavours.

The IAU GA 2024 embraced a community-first approach, ensuring that the event would leave a positive mark on local economies. A vibrant African craft market allowed small businesses to showcase their work to an international audience, while partnerships with local vendors and suppliers created economic opportunities. This approach highlighted how science events can drive sustainable development by integrating local economies into their frameworks. Beyond this, the conference celebrated African culture with performances by local artists. The legacy of these cultural showcases is the reinforced message that science and culture can be interconnected, cultivating a global appreciation for Africa's rich heritage. By intertwining culture with an astronomy conference, the GA reminded the global scientific community of the deep connections between heritage and discovery.

A cornerstone of the GA's legacy is its impact on education and public engagement. Outreach programs connected with over 28,000 school learners and 85 educators. Historic moments, such as the live link with astronaut Sunita Williams aboard the International Space Station, inspired young minds to consider careers in STEM. Keynote speakers like Dr. Mae Jemison and Dr. Sian Proctor offered compelling narratives of diversity and excellence in science. Partnerships formed during the GA, such as those with schools and universities, are expected to evolve into long-term collaborations and ignite a wave for capacity building across Africa.

The GA showcased Africa's growing contribution to astronomy globally. With institutions and facilities across Africa, the continent continues to position itself as a player in the field. The GA reinforced this position showcasing the continent's ability to host large-scale scientific events and facilitating new collaborations. Various sessions were organised by key players on the continent, with opportunities for participants to visit the facilities in South Africa and different parts of the continent.

A lasting legacy of the GA is its emphasis on capacity building. Grants funded by organisations such as the South African Department of Science Technology and Innovation (DSTI), Simons Foundation, the IAU, and LSST-Discovery Alliance enabled widespread African participation, with 901 grants awarded to students and researchers. This unprecedented level of support ensured that the GA's impact extended to those who might otherwise have been excluded, strengthening a new generation of African astronomers. The resources and networks established during the GA are expected to spark joint projects that will have a ripple effect, leading to increased research output, and innovation hubs across the continent.

The GA's hybrid format and emphasis on inclusivity have redefined how global scientific collaboration can be conducted. By breaking down geographical and financial barriers, the GA set a new standard for scientific engagement. Its success has sparked conversations about replicating this model in other disciplines, ensuring that the lessons learned extend beyond astronomy.

The partnerships formed during the GA, including those with international organisations like the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the European Space Agency (ESA), and the Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO), have created a robust network for future collaboration. These connections promise to accelerate research and innovation, benefiting the global scientific community. The GA also emphasised dark sky preservation as part of its environmental sustainability efforts, launching initiatives to protect pristine night skies for future generations of astronomers.

The XXXII IAU General Assembly was not merely an event; it was a catalyst for change. Its legacy initiatives—spanning accessibility, impact, and sustainability, touch areas of education, research, community empowerment, and global collaboration—have set a transformative precedent. By hosting the GA, Africa demonstrated its capability to lead in science and innovation while fostering a spirit of unity that transcends borders. As the scientific community reflects on this historic event, the message is clear: the legacy of the IAU GA 2024 is not confined to the past. It is a living testament to what can be achieved when science embraces inclusivity, sustainability, and a shared vision for a brighter future. The National Organising Committee continues to work towards legacy initiatives to unite the community.

Outreach & Education Activities at the IAU-GA 2024
by Duduzile Kubheka and Sally Macfarlane

Duduzile Kubheka and Sally Macfarlane - Outreach and Education co-chairs

Hosting the IAU-GA 2024 on African soil for the first time has made a notable impact. In addition to celebrating and promoting astronomy research in Africa, it provided an unparalleled opportunity to engage the African public with astronomy. The AfAS outreach and education team, supported by a veritable army of talented and passionate science communicators (consisting of IAU-GA 2024 participants, volunteers, students and many others) embarked on an audacious and ambitious hybrid outreach and education program that spanned the entire two weeks of the IAU-GA 2024 and beyond.

Central to the outreach program was the understanding that many learners and the broader Western Cape communities have limited exposure to astronomy and related fields. By engaging with these communities, the goal was to offer a glimpse of the vast possibilities in science and technology, inspiring young people to consider careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). These initiatives also aim to address educational disparities and foster a more inclusive scientific community. Some schools were invited to visit the conference venue, allowing learners to interact directly with delegates and experience hands-on exhibits.

When the conference participants were petitioned for assistance with outreach activities, the response was overwhelmingly encouraging with over 600 respondents. As a result, about 120 participants and even more volunteers ended up assisting the team with a wide range of outreach activities during the IAU-GA 2024. The outreach activities implemented were as follows:

Visits to Schools

From 6 - 15 August, outreach efforts reached over 70 schools in Cape Town and surrounding areas, extending to rural parts of the Western Cape and nearby municipal districts. The initiative was supported by more than 120 conference participants who volunteered to lead engaging sessions with learners.

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) played a crucial role, helping to connect with schools eager to host astronomers. These engagements were both successful and impactful, with some schools even having the unique opportunity to meet the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) representatives or to experience the Mobile Planetarium operated by the University of Namibia - Africa Millimeter Telescope (UNAM-AMT) team. This immersive planetarium show captivated students and deepened their understanding and enthusiasm for astronomy, for many, it was their very first opportunity to experience a planetarium show. We also received support from local partners such as the South African Astronomical Observatory (NRF-SAAO), South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRF-SARAO), South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (NRF-SAASTA), South African National Space Agency (SANSA), University of South Africa (UNISA), University of Pretoria (UP) Sci-Enza and the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) who played a big role in facilitating the school visits. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the dedication and support of the team leads from all over the world who coordinated the schools and participants during the school engagements.


LEGACY

We would like to give credit to the following team leads: Simphiwe Madlanga, Albert Forson, Brandon Bisschoff, Buzani Khumalo, Cedric Jacobs, Dorothy Mlambo, Happy Vilakazi, JC Viljoen, Moleboge Lekoloane, Kabelo Pheeha, Thandile Vuntu, Moloko Makwetja, Mduduzi Ndebele, Nompendulo Sibiya, Narusha Isaacs-Klein, Nikhita Madhanpall, Njabulo Duma, Nombali Qodi, Samuel Nyangi, Shelley-Anne Deborah Harrisberg, Topollo Hlomphile, Tshepiso Maroga Kgomotso Malema, Thuto Ndlovu, Steve Sotti, Zodwa Tiki, and the UNAM-AMT Mobile Planetarium team; Zandré Duvenhage, Amanda Schut and Hambelani Davids.

Virtual Teacher Training Sessions

Ten virtual teacher training sessions were held during the IAU-GA 2024, each featuring three to four presenters and attended by groups of four to twelve teachers. In total, at least 45 teachers participated, along with a few additional unregistered attendees, representing 37 different schools. As these teachers continue to instruct new student groups over time, the number of learners impacted is expected to grow significantly.

These sessions were conducted with the incredible support and partnership of the Primary Science Programme (PSP), a non-profit organisation recognised for effective approaches to improving the quality of primary school education in South Africa, particularly in under-resourced schools. PSP achieves this by focusing on the training and professional development of teachers.

Plans are now in place to conduct more regular teacher training sessions and expand into ongoing offerings. These efforts have led to the establishment of strong collaborations among many organisations which will further enhance the reach and effectiveness of the education initiatives.

The IAU Meet an Astronomer virtual session

These sessions aimed to engage learners and the general public at all levels through interactive seminar sessions featuring astronomers. Each session included a presentation by an astronomer about their work, followed by a lively discussion and question-and-answer segment with participants. Approximately 30 astronomers from around the world volunteered to deliver these talks online, with the majority coming from the African continent. Over the two weeks of the IAU-GA 2024, five virtual sessions were successfully conducted, each attracting an average of 30 participants. Additionally, two more sessions were held after the IAU-GA 2024, also averaging 30 participants. Despite some sessions not taking place due to a lack of response from applicants, plans were in place to reconnect and reschedule the missed engagements. These sessions were coordinated with the assistance of Dr. Tshiamiso Makwela.

Public talks

A series of fascinating public talks were held at the Cape Town International Conference Centre (CTICC) and various locations across Cape Town, including the South African Astronomical Observatory (NRF-SAAO), the Iziko South African Museum, the Iziko Planetarium and Digital Dome, and the Cape Town Science Centre. These talks, featuring world-renowned astronomers presenting on a wide range of exciting topics, drew in over 2,300 public attendees.

At the CTICC, astronaut Dr. Sian Proctor shared her inspiring life story as the first female African American commercial pilot in space. Steve Sherman also enthralled the audience, acting as master of ceremonies for the evening and conducting an interactive and highly entertaining astronomy quiz. The following night several NASA representatives gave a series of exciting presentations during a special event titled “An Evening with NASA”. Additionally, Prof. Gerry Gilmore delivered a talk at the CTICC on “Our Dynamic Milky Way,” while Prof. George Ellis from the University of Cape Town (UCT) explored “The Nature of the Universe”.

In addition to the activities, Prof. Ewine van Dishoek discussed the James Webb Space Telescope at the Iziko South African Museum. The Iziko Planetarium and Digital Dome hosted a special screening of the award-winning film !AITSA - a film about the South African Great Karoo desert people searching for meaning in the boundless darkness surrounding us. At the

Cape Town Science Centre, Prof. Marcus Byrne and Prof. Heidi Becker presented memorable topics, including dung beetles that navigate using stars, and the incredible mission by the Juno spacecraft to Jupiter.

The NRF-SAAO Open Nights coordinated by the science engagement team , featured an impressive lineup of speakers, attracting over 360 attendees. Presenters included Dr. Lisa Crause, an instrumentation astronomer at NRF-SAAO, Prof. Ewine van Dishoeck from Leiden Observatory, a renowned expert in molecular astrophysics, Natalia Lewandowska, an assistant professor of Physics at the State University of New York at Oswego and Mark Clampin, NASA's astrophysics director. Senkhosi Simelane, an MSc candidate from the University of the Witwatersrand, shared insights from his research, while Joseph Lazio, chief scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, presented his field of expertise. Additional speakers included Melissa Solares, a science teacher from the American School of Guatemala, Christina Thöne, an affiliated scientist at the Czech Academy of Sciences' Astronomical Institute, and Anna Lena Schiable, a student from Heidelberg University in Germany.

High School Visits to the CTICC

Two high school visits were hosted at the Cape Town International Conference Centre (CTICC) on 7 and 14 August, attracting over 1000 excited learners from over 15 Cape Town schools. Each day-long visit consisted of the opportunity to explore the exhibition hall and engage with the exhibitors, followed by a series of career talks, an astronomy quiz and an interactive science show. Many young and early career African astronomers namely Munira Hoosain, Moses Mogotsi, Michelle Lochner, Shazrene Mohamed, Itumeleng Monageng, Lucia Marchetti, and Nompendulo Sibiya presented career talks foregrounding their personal experiences. Tebogo Habedi engrossed the learners with an entertaining science show and astronomy quizzes were run by Mduduzi Ndebele, Nikhita Madhanpall, Karina Santana, and Mika Naidoo. These school visits were coordinated with the

crucial assistance of Nikhita Madhanpall, and the respective master of ceremonies for each event: Simphiwe Madlanga and Dr Gillian John Arendse, who expertly ensured the students were deeply engaged throughout.

Puppet Planet Workshops

Four Puppet Planet training sessions and workshops were held at the Iziko Planetarium and Digital Dome, and were attended by over 150 primary school learners. These workshops, led by Dr. Wendy Taylor and her non-profit organisation Puppet Planet, featured a 20-minute puppet show that focused on the search for life in the Universe. Following the performance, participants took part in a hands-on, arts-centred workshop, allowing them to use their creativity and imagination to explore the topics presented in the show.

The objective of the Puppet Planet workshops was to create regular programs for school groups at Iziko Museums, providing jobs for young performers and musicians. Overall their program promotes children's robotics using Microbit kits provided by the Western Cape Education Department, introducing a new astronomy-focused storyline aligned with the South African schools' curriculum. Furthermore, the initiative features original music and dance created in partnership with local musicians as part of the Science Through Song program.

Woman's Day Public Event, with ISS Contact and presentation by Mae Jemison

The Women's Day public event, held on 9 August to commemorate South Africa's National Women's Day, was especially significant, attracting over 1,000 attendees in-person at the CTICC, and more than 1,000 online viewers watching the live YouTube recording. The event offered a range of activities, including an exhibition walkabout for the public, a science show, and career talks by prominent women in astronomy at various stages of their careers.

These three inspiring talks were given by Narusha Isaacs, Dr. Vanessa Moss, and Dr. Anne Njeri, with a highly entertaining science show presented by Tebogo Habedi. A key highlight was a live 10-minute contact with the International Space Station (ISS), in collaboration with the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS), during which ten school learners had the unique opportunity to ask astronaut Capt. Sunita Williams questions. The event also featured commercial astronaut Dr. Sian Proctor, who attended in person. The event began with a keynote address and Q&A session by Dr. Mae Jemison, the first African American woman in space, who shared her personal experiences and insights.

We are grateful to everyone who helped to make this event possible. We give our sincere thanks to Shirley Aoko and Ogochukwu Chibueze, who helped coordinate the event, as well as to Ramasamy Venugopal,

Alick Le Jeune, Steve Sherman, Martin Diggens, Frank Bauer and the ARISS team, and the AV team who all helped transform the ISS contact from dream into reality.

The Astronomer's Got Other Talents Evening

Just like all the other activities, this too was collaboratively organised by many enthusiastic GA ambassadors and the outreach team, this lively event was dedicated to pure entertainment, brilliantly hosted by Nompendulo Sibiya, featuring acts that showcased a variety of talents, such as singing, dancing, poetry, and musical performances. It was an evening of fun and creativity, highlighting other talents of astronomers beyond their scientific expertise. This event was coordinated with the assistance of GA Ambassador lead - Venu Prayag, Mduduzi Ndebele, Najam Hasan and Blessing Musiimenta.

The #AfricaLookUp Cultural Evening

This enchanting evening celebrated Africa's rich cultural heritage and its historic connection to the skies. Through diverse artistic expressions, including storytelling, music, dance, and poetry, we explored the timeless wisdom of indigenous knowledge. The gathering was not just a celebration but a journey of discovery and connection. As we gathered beneath the African skies, we honoured our shared humanity and our deep bond with the cosmos. Every story shared, and each dance performed reflected the enduring spirit of our collective heritage.

At the heart of the evening was profound respect for indigenous wisdom—such as the celestial navigation techniques of ancient seafarers and the intricate star maps passed down through generations. These cultural narratives offered valuable insights into our place in the Universe.

The evening welcomed contributions from various conference participants across Africa and the rest of the world, with acts from Ghana, Mauritius, Egypt, and Ethiopia just to name a few. These groups shared different artistic traditions, transforming the event into an enriching exchange of knowledge and deepening our human connections. Key performances included the IThemba Youth Choir from Khayelitsha and the UP Ovuwa Cultural Ensemble, made up of students from the University of Pretoria.

The evening also featured the incredible Mama Gcina Mhlophe, a celebrated South African writer, storyteller, playwright, and actress who has made a significant impact in the literary and entertainment industries. Her creative work spans across multiple genres, including children's literature, poetry, plays, and short stories.

Challenges and Recommendations

The outreach team faced several significant challenges throughout the IAU-GA 2024. The extensive number of activities left the team severely overstretched, making it difficult to manage everything effectively. Despite initially receiving over 150 school applications, the team had to decline visits to some schools due to safety concerns in specific areas, resulting in the unfortunate exclusion of many underserved schools from participating. This challenge remains an issue but the committee is actively exploring additional engagements to find solutions. Relying solely on volunteers to execute such a vast project also proved impractical , as volunteers were sometimes unreliable, posing a risk to the project's overall success. Additionally, where social events were concerned, accommodating the requirements of various stakeholders, working around AV limitations, and scheduling rehearsals presented considerable logistical hurdles.

Furthermore, there were notable preconceptions about safety from international participants, with some refusing to visit certain areas for school engagements, these concerns impacted the original plans, necessitating adjustments to the program.

To address these challenges in the future, several recommendations have been made. Advanced planning could prevent many of the issues encountered. Increased investment in core staff dedicated to outreach and education initiatives would help distribute the workload effectively. For more inclusive and safer engagement, collaborating with a broader range of community stakeholders is crucial. Having a solid, reliable team and organising activities well in advance would ensure smoother operations. Finally, it is advisable to avoid planning an overwhelming number of engagements if the team has limited capacity to maintain the quality and success of the program.

Conclusion

Overall, the outreach and education program achieved tremendous success despite the challenges, engaging diverse audiences across multiple platforms and creating a

meaningful impact on learners, educators, and the general public. In total, the program reached approximately 28,000 school learners, 85 educators, and over 3,800 members of the public. While these impressive numbers speak for themselves, ongoing efforts aim to ensure a lasting and more meaningful impact through the African Astronomical Society.

Future plans include the donation of the 100 TVs that were used for the ePoster sessions—each consisting of a 40" screen, Raspberry Pi computer, webcam, mouse, and keyboard—to underserved schools across South Africa. These systems will provide valuable educational resources, support continuous learning, and enrich future astronomy engagement. The initiative also hopes to inspire the formation of astronomy clubs, where regular virtual astronomy events can be hosted, fostering sustained interest and participation. Looking forward, the program will continue through virtual activities with schools, as well as potential site visits to astronomy facilities.

A heartfelt acknowledgement goes to the many people, both mentioned and unmentioned in this article, whose dedication, time, and effort made this outreach possible. It is thanks to their contributions that we achieved this extensive reach and, hopefully, a lasting impact. As the South African proverb says, umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu—"a person is a person through other people". The success of this massive endeavor is a testament to the collective efforts and commitment of everyone involved, and while the full impact of our work may not be immediately visible, we remain hopeful for the future.

Inspiring Young Minds Into Astronomy: Perspective on the School Outreach Visit

By Samuel Nyangi

For the first time in over 100 years of the IAU's existence, the IAU General Assembly,whichmeets everythreeyears,finallycametotheAfricancontinent.The event took place at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) from 6th August to 15th August 2024. The event brought over 2,000 physical attendees from over 100 countries, a milestone for Africa. Furthermore, the event presented an opportunity for the global astronomy community to explore essential topics in astronomy. Additionally, it allowed them to evaluate the latest advancements in various specialised fields.

Not to mention, the IAU-GA also implemented a massive outreach programme for schools over the two weeks. This was to ensure that they inspired learners across Cape Town with this historic moment, leveraging the interest of professional astronomers in astronomy education and outreach. Volunteers and delegates coordinated astronomy talks, activities, and visits that inspired the young generation and exposed them to astronomy. Similarly, this initiative impacted over 23,000 learners from over 70 schools.

Preparing for the Visits

The planning process involved coordinating efforts between school heads, delegates and the AfAS outreach committee team. Additionally, coordination with volunteers to design activities that would captivate the learners emphasised the critical role of teamwork in such an operation. As the team leader, my role was to ensure everyone was aligned with the mission while creating an environment where creativity and collaboration could thrive. I worked closely with my team to ensure our sessions were engaging, interactive, and tailored to the learner's interests and age groups. The AfAS team ensured diversity, both in gender and nationality, in the selection of delegates assigned to different schools. This enabled me to interact with professional astronomers and postgraduate students from countries such as Ireland, the United Kingdom, and The U.S., among other African countries such as Botswana and Egypt. This approach ensured a more holistic representation of everyone's participation in astronomy, with the intention to inspire learners to have a more global outlook on the nature of the field.

The School Visits in Action

Professional astronomers, students, and volunteers from across the globe coordinated different outreach activities. One of the activities included planetarium shows for schools, which was facilitated by the African Millimetre Telescope (AMT) team. AMT's mobile planetarium is run by the University of Namibia staff and students, who conducted several planetarium shows and visited over 15 schools around Cape Town.

The African Astronomical Society also donated eclipse glasses, galileo scopes, astronomy charts and other outreach materials that facilitated different activities during the schools' outreach program. In most schools, astronomers also presented astronomy topics such as stars, the solar system and black holes. Additionally, they presented some of their research work to the students, communicating effectively for their understanding. All in all, learners from all the visited schools experienced hands-on- activities, interactions and presentations that would create curiosity in them to have an interest in astronomy and inspire them to pursue related careers and dream big!

Learners were curious, enthusiastic, and eager to learn, rewarding our efforts. Memorable moments included the many questions the kids asked regarding extraterrestrial life, our various nationalities, and pathways for a career in space, among many others. Seeing their eyes light up during planetarium shows, viewing the sun through eclipse glasses, or hearing their thought-provoking questions about the Universe reminded me why such outreach initiatives are vital.

Conclusion

Leading the school outreach visits during the IAU General Assembly was an enriching experience. It deepened my commitment to empowering young minds through science and demonstrated the value of teamwork, creativity, and dedication. As we look to the future, initiatives like this will continue to inspire and nurture the next generation of explorers, innovators, and leaders.

This experience reinforced my belief in the importance of astronomy outreach and helped me grow as a leader. It was an opportunity to inspire a new generation ofthinkers and dreamers, especially in a continent like Africa, where the potential for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics growth is immense. I saw firsthand how these visits could ignite a spark that might one day lead to groundbreaking discoveries or innovative solutions to global challenges.

Bridging Science and Society: My Role in the Outreach and Engagement at the IAU General Assembly

By Mduduzi Ndebele

In August 2024, I had the privilege of volunteering at the International Astronomical Union's (IAU) General Assembly (GA) in Cape Town. This prestigious event brought together astronomers, educators, and science enthusiasts from around the globe to share ideas and promote the advancement of astronomy. During the GA, I contributed to several impactful initiatives, including school visits, teacher training workshops, and cultural exchange events. It was an incredible opportunity to not only engage with the international astronomy community but also to create a meaningful impact on local learners and educators.

One of my most rewarding roles was coordinating the IAU's School Visits Programme. This program aimed to inspire the next generation of scientists by bringing professional astronomers to schools. I facilitated these visits, ensuring that astronomers could deliver engaging talks on topics such as space exploration, astronomy facilities, and stellar physics. Seeing the learners' eyes light up as they learned about the vast possibilities within the Universe was a highlight for me. I also had the opportunity to deliver talks , sharing my journey in astronomy and encouraging learners to consider careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. It was fulfilling to plant seeds of curiosity and ambition in young minds, particularly in schools that might otherwise have limited exposure to such opportunities.

My work at the GA extended to assisting with teacher training workshops organised by the Office of Astronomy for Development (OAD). These workshops were designed to provide educators with tools to incorporate modern astronomy into their teaching while integrating elements of indigenous cultural knowledge. By

connecting the cosmic sciences with cultural heritage, we helped make science education more inclusive and accessible. This approach not only strengthened the relevance of astronomy in everyday life but also highlighted how our diverse histories can coexist with cutting-edge scientific advancements.

Beyond these formal educational efforts, I also embraced opportunities to foster cultural exchange and collaboration among the international delegates attending the GA. I also had the privilege to help plan a talent show where delegates could share performances that represented their cultures, creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and camaraderie. The talent show was a powerful reminder of how science and art intersect as universal languages that unite people across borders.

Additionally, I organised a hike up Lion's Head, one of Cape Town's most iconic landmarks. This activity allowed delegates to experience South Africa's breathtaking natural beauty while engaging in informal conversations about astronomy, culture, and global collaboration. As we climbed, the conversations became a metaphor for the shared journey of discovery and exploration that defines the field of astronomy.

My time at the GA was an enriching experience that reinforced my passion for science outreach and education. I believe that science, particularly astronomy, has the power to inspire wonder and transform lives. Through my contributions at the GA, I was able to witness firsthand the impact of bringing science to people, sparking curiosity and fostering connections between communities and the universe.

Astronomer's visit at Nduli Primary School
By Ntomboxolo Mdange

Our school had an astronomer's visit on 7 August; they visited our Grade 7 learners where they showed a new world of space.The visit was fruitful. Our learners were fully engaged and intrigued; as a small school from a small area in Ceres, IUA-GA outreach sparked our learners' curiosity and imagination and encouraged them to become increasingly involved in the science world.

Our learners were career inspired; they saw themselves as the next generation of scientists, engineers, and explorers and astronauts. The visit undoubtedly played a pivotal role in igniting the spark of curiosity and ambition in young minds.

We as the teachers were excited to be part of such an initiative that has brought positivity in our learner's minds. It was indeed an experience we would like to experience again in a much bigger venue so that our learners can feel a full sense of how the world of science works.

Our experience with astronomers' visits at Soneike High School

By Phumlani Manzini

As a teacher at Soneike high school, I had the privilege of hosting a group of esteemed guests from the General Assembly in August this year. The visit was an incredible opportunity for our learners to engage with astronomers and gain some insights about science, engineering or rather STEM. In this article I will be sharing our experience and benefits of this enriching visit.

The General Assembly team spent a day at our school, interacting with our learners and sharing their expertise in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. The team's enthusiasm and passion for their work were contagious and our learners were immediately drawn to their energy. The visitors conducted interactive sessions that made learners curious about some of the things that they did not know and asked questions for more insights.

Some of the benefits of the visit include inspiring learners' curiosity and creativity in STEM fields. It provided a platform for learners to engage with experts. Emphasised the relevance of STEM education in solving real world problems, for example when they were dealing with coding. I can say it mainly encouraged learners to pursue careers in the STEM fields.

In conclusion, the visit was an unforgettable experience for our learners. We are grateful for the opportunity to have hosted such an inspiring group of individuals. We look forward to continuing to inspire the learners to become the next generation of leaders and innovators.

Some of the African Voices at the IAU-GA 2024
By Shirley Aoko

Capturing the voices of African researchers and students at the GA was a powerful experience for me as a virtual attendee. As an online volunteer for the Daily Newspaper, my main role was to gather insights from African participants at the GA. Through WhatsApp calls, I connected with onsite attendees, initially expecting the experience to be limited by the screen but their enthusiasm was perceivable. Each voice brimming with excitement as they shared their experiences, I found myself living the GA vicariously through their words and enthusiasm. For many, it was a dream come true—an inspiring chance to present their groundbreaking work to an international audience. Their vivid descriptions of the unfolding events made me feel as though I was right there with them, experiencing the event empirically.

I could not do enough justice to their experiences but I knew I had to try:

Dr. Jive Lubbungu, a lecturer and researcher at Kwame Nkrumah University, who is passionately dedicated to promoting women in astronomy in Zambia. At the GA, he presented his insightful work, “Women in Astronomy: A Comprehensive Situational Analysis in Zambia.” Eager to learn from other professionals, he sought ways to blend his expertise in literature with his passion for astronomy. Dr. Lubbungu was an active volunteer, assisting at e-poster sessions, and assisting in the auditorium. He was also one of the facilitators for the Teacher-Training workshop held on 9th August. Through this experience, he has built valuable connections with international organizations, marking a significant turning point in his research journey. Reflecting on the event, Dr. Lubbungu resonated with the GA’s powerful mantra, “It is time for Africa,” noting how the participation of African students is driving positive change and shifting perceptions.

As a fellow online participant, interacting with one of the few Congolese nationals was a privilege. Joseph Mafuka Lusala, a dedicated member of the National Astronomy Education Coordinator team for the Democratic Republic of Congo, making his mark as an online volunteer at the GA. Immersed in a global network of astronomy enthusiasts, Mafuka is one of the few Congolese participants, carrying the weight of representing his nation. He was inspired by the vast opportunities he encountered as an online volunteer and presenter. The sessions and talks that he attended has fueled his desire to empower African youth especially the youths in his country through astronomy education. “This GA has opened doors for African youth to dream big in astronomy,” he commented, eager to see more young minds reach for the stars.

Other young and vibrant researchers that were present at the conference were : Terry Mark Tukamusaba, Master of Science in Physics student from Kyambogo University in Uganda, set out to connect with leading professionals and peers at the GA, aiming to spark future collaborations. Terry made two presentations at the GA; a poster presentation on his work on “Stellar Pulsations in Low Mass Stars” and an oral presentation on “Evaluating Astronomy Education in Uganda & Africa through vlogging” in Division C. Terry felt more inspired than ever. He believes the opportunities presented at the GA aligned perfectly with his goals to enhance his research skills and contribute to astronomical discoveries in Africa. Impressed by the inclusive environment and diversity, Terry noted that the GA had far exceeded his expectations. Reflecting on the event’s significance as the first GA hosted on African soil, he remarked, “This event has showcased Africa’s rich cultural heritage, inspiring a new generation of astronomers while transforming global perceptions of the continent’s contributions to science and research.” I could not agree more with his comment.

George Rwegoshora Kato, a passionate geologist from Afrikagera Geological Centre in Tanzania, made a significant impact with his poster presentations in Division C-4 and a presentation at the Outreach and Heritage at the conference. Eager to witness the collaborative efforts in astronomy across Africa and beyond, George found himself deeply inspired and said his ambition to establish an astronomy center in Tanzania is even more at reach thanks to the insightful lessons. He urges Africans to continue collaborating, exploring the universe together. “We must keep hosting such conferences in Africa,” he emphasized. George also applauded the organizers for their exceptional work and warmly welcomes future collaborations at Afrikagera Geological Centre. Elineema Nassari, a masters student and instructor at the Mount Meru Astronomical Observatory. He expressed mixed feelings about his GA participation and giving an online poster presentation. While he was disappointed not to attend in person - which had been his primary hope - due to insufficient travel funds, he remained deeply grateful for the opportunity to participate virtually. Despite the setback, Elineema has gained invaluable knowledge and experience in astronomy.
As an instructor, he especially values the lessons learned on astronomy education, which he plans to implement to his students.

As I wrapped up my incredible journey at the 2024 General Assembly through this article, my gratitude overflows for this opportunity. The wealth of knowledge I have gained from the sessions, the inspiring conversations with fellow participants, and the rare chance I had to observe the Daily Newspaper team at work are invaluable experiences that have reignited my passion for astronomy and quest to give African astronomers a voice to share their experience.

A standout moment for me was during the Women in Astronomy event, where the organizers connected with an astronaut on the International Space Station (ISS). Watching school children eagerly ask their questions, their excitement was palpable and unforgettable. Africa’s potential in science is immense. The rising generation is pioneering in research, innovation, and education. I’m optimistic that, within the coming decades, Africa will see as many opportunities as developed continents. Embodying the spirit of the GA’s mantra I will conclude with, “IT IS TIME FOR AFRICA.

My personal overview on the International Astronomical Union (IAU) General Assembly 2024, held for the first time in Africa – Cape Town, South Africa

By Meryem Guennoun

I was overjoyed to be selected for a grant that allowed me to attend the IAU General Assembly in Cape Town, South Africa. As an early-career researcher, this grant was crucial for covering my registration and travel expenses. Without it, I wouldn't have been able to participate, so I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity.

Another highlight was the acceptance of my contributions ; a talk and a poster presentation, at such a prestigious conference. I was even more honoured to be invited to chair a session, which was both an exciting and humbling experience.

Upon arriving at the General Assembly, I was immediately impressed by the scale of the event. Having participated in the organization of conferences myself, I was in awe of how smoothly the event was run, especially with the sheer number of participants. My respect for the organizers grew even more when I saw how beautifully they integrated African culture into every aspect of the event. From the vibrant colours to the music and the celebration of South African traditions, it was inspiring to see how seamlessly science and culture were brought together.

Cape Town itself is a breathtaking city, and I enjoyed exploring its rich and diverse heritage. The experience allowed me to discover South Africa's many cultural facets, which enriched my experience as both a scientist and a visitor.

A significant moment for me during the General Assembly was being part of the African Network for Women in Astronomy (AfNWA). I had recently accepted to join the board, and this GA provided the perfect opportunity to meet the other board members in person. Together, we held a meeting with incredible women, where we shared our personal journeys, challenges, and ideas on how to strengthen the network. Our discussions focused on how we can support and uplift women scientists across Africa, ensuring

they have the resources and opportunities to succeed in astronomy. This meeting was a pivotal moment, as it reinforced the importance of community and collaboration in advancing science and gender equality in Africa.

During the GA, I also had the opportunity to take part in some truly fun activities. One of the highlights was participating in Astronomers Got Talent, where I joined other participants in a singing performance. It was an incredibly fun and memorable experience, showcasing the lighter, more creative side of astronomers!

Another memorable experience was an outreach activity in Muizenberg, a town near Cape Town. I presented the session alongside four amazing women from different countries. It was a unique experience to work together, and I was grateful for the chance to share that moment with them and learn from their diverse perspectives. At the

school, I spoke about my journey as an African woman in science, and the learners' enthusiasm left a lasting impact on me. Their curiosity and passion reminded me of the importance of outreach and how meaningful it is to inspire the next generation.

In conclusion, my participation in the IAU General Assembly 2024 was an unforgettable experience. From delivering talks and leading discussions to engaging in outreach activities and even participating in fun side events or discovering Cape Town city, I left the conference with a renewed sense of purpose and an even stronger connection to the global astronomy community, and the African one in particular. The fact that this historic event was held for the first time in Africa made it all the more significant, and I am proud to have been part of it.

AfWNA At and Beyond the IAU General Assembly
By Priscilla Muheki

For the African Network of Women in Astronomy (AfNWA), the IAU GA 2024 was not just a meeting but a significant moment of coming together, reflecting and refocusing on the future of the network. Since the inception of AfNWA, a lot has been done including: training on different concepts, supporting outreach activities with seed grants, recognising excellent women in astronomy in Africa through the AfNWA awards not to mention but a few.

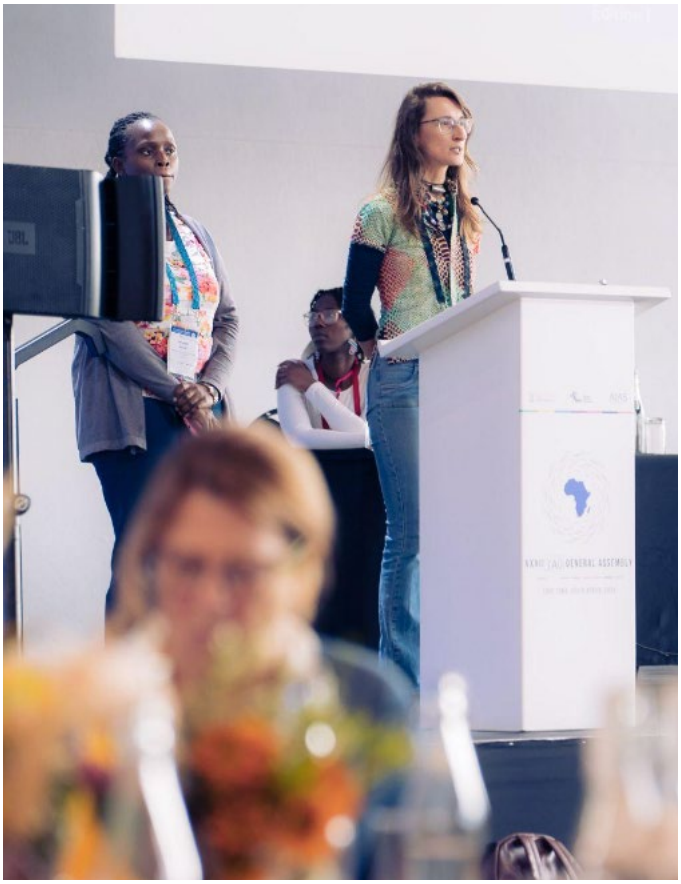
However, in preparation for the GA, AfNWA embarked on a unique project in which we would showcase the remarkable journeys of professional female astronomers in Africa. A collection of original, beautiful, diverse yet relatable experiences, the AfNWA story book, was a highlight for us at this important meeting. This book, a real beacon of hope to the reader, was successfully launched during the Women in Astronomy lunch session on August 9, 2024. Big thanks to our ever incredible chair of the national organising committee, Kevin Govender and his team who sponsored the printing of all the copies that were produced during the GA and given to all interested participants free of charge.

I personally attest to the excitement of those who acquired copies of how uplifting the stories of so many women from different backgrounds who have been resilient and stood the test of time, eventually emerging successful . These women have brought colour to astronomy through their significant contributions to discoveries and science, mentorship, community service and development, teaching and training the next generation of great astronomers and scientists. We are forever indebted to all these ladies who took time to share their stories for this first edition of this beautiful story book. You are the reason this dream became a reality. We surely believe these stories will not only be a source of inspiration and empowerment to the younger generations in Africa but all the world through. Cheers to the African Science Stars team who worked over and beyond within the shortest period of time to effectuate this project.

Anyone in need of a copy, please reach out at pmuheki@must.ac.ug.

On another high note, thanks to the GA, the AfNWA community members were able to put faces to the names. We held the first ever physical community meeting and this played a fundamental role in planning for the future of the network and how to increase its vibrancy. Beyond the formalities, members exchanged ideas and established connections that will continue to influence them thus facilitating the objectives of creating this network.

I have no doubt that the moments shared at this meeting have left indelible footprints on the lives of the participants. I hope that the seeds that were sowed during this iconic event will yield abundant fruit for AfNWA and the whole astronomy community in Africa for years to come. Kudos to all the organisers for all the wonderful work done to make this a memorable event in the international astronomical community.
It indeed is, time for Africa!



Radio Astro during the General Assembly
By Bobby Brown

It's known that generating mainstream media exposure for scientific events, especially one as niche as astronomy, is challenging at the best of times. With this knowledge, the organisers of the IAU's first African GA brainstormed innovative ways to secure publicity for the event. Radio Astro was born out of this process, as well as the determination to make the Cape Town gathering exceptional, engaging and memorable. One of the many challenges came from the fact that – like most other businesses, media outlets are feeling the economic pinch, forcing them to systematically reduce staff. This means most newsrooms have significantly shrunk in size and skills, leading to a "juniorisation" of the industry. Meaning even if an outlet is interested in a story, they simply may not have the necessary resources to cover it.

Juniorisation has led to other sad eventualities in news coverage, such as a noticeable slip in quality and a focus on what is considered to be the main stories, at the expense of what is arguably the more interesting stories. But mostly, junior staff are overwhelmed by daily story targets, forcing them to become "armchair reporters" focussed on stories they can easily source online or by means of phone calls/messaging. Most certainly, they could not be able to attend an event like the GA, which would require their presence over several days. This could usually be achieved if it is paid-for media coverage, which has become a new revenue source for media houses. However, advertorial carries less credibility than organic media coverage – the stories that are naturally assigned and covered based on interest from users/viewers/listeners/readers. Needless to say, the latter is the most sought-after, but is also becoming the hardest to obtain, due to the challenges outlined.

One more publicity challenge is ensuring that an event's designated media people are available for interviews at convenient times to both parties. Ironically, this becomes a greater challenge when the PR has been successful. It is practically impossible to achieve when several media outlets want to interview the same "news-maker" at different times of the same day, while the person in question has other appointments. It is a Catch-22, as the coverage is desired, but the reporters' specific request cannot be entertained, resulting in a lost opportunity; and since the event is not considered a hard-news story, it is not something that the outlet sees as a serious loss for them.

Instead of seeing scheduling as a major issue, Radio Astro instead saw it as an outreach legacy project therefore interviewed anyone who was available and willing to share their science giving the station further impact and value. Searching for a novel mechanism that would help us overcome the publicity hurdles, is what gave rise to Radio Astro – deliberately named for the ambiguity that appeals to both the general public, as well as space scientists, particularly radio astronomers.

The idea was relatively simple; use commercial radio formatting to establish an online talk radio station, broadcasting content from the GA. Considering that the content was so varied and extensive, Radio Astro chose to focus on the highlights, topical issues and "news-worthy" content that would appeal to media outlets and the general public. We did not simply broadcast this into the internet ether. Instead of conventional PR methods (ie, shotgun emailing hundreds of media outlets and hoping for the best), we used known simulcast templates that fit most radio station formats. This format allowed us to send our daily content schedules and interview timings to radio stations, allowing them to live re-broadcast our content, or edit it for later use. Online platforms could do the same; whereas print outlets could simply assign someone to transcribe our interviews from the comfort of their desks. This eliminated their need to assign a person to attend the event, while still getting all the relevant, new content.

It also allowed media outlets (radio stations in particular) to pre-sell the content to their advertisers, giving them a free revenue stream. In other words, using our schedules, they could sell advertising or sponsorships around the coming interviews at premium value, without the associated costs of having to collect the content. Since we made the content freely available, they could generate clean profits. It is not clear if any of our partner radio stations took advantage of this, but the option was available to them. Some said they would have appreciated more lead-time to fully explore such an opportunity . If nothing else, they had access to professional and well-produced radio content from the event site – these are known as "outside broadcasts" and are highly coveted in the radio industry.

While Radio Astro was managed by two highly-skilled industry professionals, the work was done by student broadcasters from BridgesForMusic - an audio academy, based in one of Cape Town's underserved communities. This created a rare opportunity for aspiring young broadcasters to get sought-after in-service mentorship in the talk radio simulcast format. For these future science communicators, such training is hard to come by, if not entirely impossible in the current climate.

While the Radio Astro model allowed us to reach the audiences of at least eighteen partner terrestrial radio stations, it also meant that we could broadcast directly to our own online audience of ordinary people, curious students, industry professionals, remote and in-person attendees. Many of them complimented us on the initiative and enjoyed being interviewed by our excited and bubbly students.

These are the most innovative aspects of Radio Astro. In a media landscape that is resource-challenged and constrained by the "juniorisation" of newsrooms, this is a unique way to approach future PR, which I believe will become a standard. And appropriately, it was pioneered by an industry accustomed to breaking new boundaries - the astronomy sector, with seed funding from the Astronomy for Development arm of the IAU.

Distribution:

We worked with the National Community Radio Forum, to which most of South Africa's community radio stations are affiliated. Each station has 30 000-50 000 listeners and at least eighteen re-broadcast some or most of the livestream feed we provided; or used edited audio in their shows and/or news bulletins. Being new online, we managed to build strong authority in a short space of time and also had a handful of independent listeners. Note that we were not able to tell if these were lone individuals, or groups of listeners, which will only account for one.

Content:

Radio Astro broadcast live on each day of the event, from 10am to 4pm. Each show lasted for two hours and was hosted by our interns,

who were required to apprise themselves of the topics and prepare questions for guests. While they were on air, others observed, roamed and recorded and edited interviews with guests from the event-floor, or shot and prepared social media content, giving them all-round experience of modern radio output and expectations. Collectively, we did more than 40 live interviews, played out more than a dozen pre-recorded interview packages and posted close to 100 different content pieces on social media platforms.

Mentorship:

Radio Astro co-opted eight students from the BridgesForMusic Academy in Langa township. They all had training or were graduates in audio production and had basic understanding of commercial broadcasting. We also extended the mentorship to three independent media students who were keen to learn, and earn the stipend that was made available to all of them. Two media professionals were on hand daily to supervise and mentor in all aspects of the process, including production, interview preparation, style and engagement.

Legacy:

The IAU Office of Astronomy for Development extended extra funding for Radio Astro to continue for a short period after the GA. The project has evolved into a business model for events at large, but science-based events and gatherings in particular, to support our government's drive to encourage interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. We are now in the process of soliciting funding from science agencies and organisations to continue the outreach aspect of the project, but also proposing it to events as an effective publicity instrument. The original GA broadcast, as well as the extended period, remains available here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ldhg9R8j4Ho&t=4431s

Radio Astro now broadcasts periodically, with the aim of permanent weekly broadcasts from 2025 onwards, using the same model perfected during the GA.

AfAS-2025 Conference

AfAS-2025 will take place from 23-28 March 2025 at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Gauteng for the AfAS-2025 Conference and General Assembly! This annual gathering celebrates Africa's flourishing astronomy community, bringing together scientists, students, educators, and international partners to connect, share, and plan for the future of African astronomy. Hosted by UNISA, this hybrid event invites both in-person and virtual participation.

Registration link: https://events.saao.ac.za/event/10/abstracts/
Abstract submissions: https://events.saao.ac.za/event/10/registrations/5/
Special session proposals: https://events.saao.ac.za/event/10/surveys/

Call for Bids to host the AfAS-2026 Conference

The African Astronomical Society (AfAS) invites bids from institutions on the African continent to host the AfAS Annual Conference in 2026. Institutions within South Africa are not eligible to submit a bid under this call. This prestigious event provides a platform for the African astronomical community to showcase research, foster collaboration, and promote the advancement of astronomy across the continent and beyond. For more information:

https://www.africanastronomicalsociety.org/2024/11/21/call-for-bids-to-host-the-african-astronomicalsociety-afas-annual-conference-in-2026/