Column

Astronomy Communication Across Africa: The IAU National Outreach Coordinators

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The International Astronomical Union National Outreach Coordinators (IAU NOCs) serve a vital role in their communities. As the tie between the IAU and local public engagement activities, they are responsible for disseminating materials and resources into their communities, broadening the IAU's reach, and leveraging astronomy communication to move toward a better and more equitable future. The NOCs and their teams truly embody the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach motto - Astronomy for Everyone. In 2024, the OAO is excited to join the rest of the IAU community at the XXXII IAU General Assembly in Cape Town, South Africa. In celebration of this event, we asked the IAU NOCs from across the African continent to describe their work, demonstrating the diversity of astronomy communication taking place in these communities.

Algeria

Mourad Hamdouche (NOC), Chaima Amine-khodja (Incoming NOC), Jamal Mimouni (Former NOC)

Algeria has a thriving community of amateur astronomers engaged in outreach, mainly at the local level. Most large and medium cities have an astronomy club or association, though they need a unifying structure. These groups convene at regional astronomy gatherings, the most notable being the annual National Festival of Popular Astronomy in Constantine. The Algerian astronomy community participates regularly in leading international events like Global Astronomy Month, 100 Hours of Astronomy, World Space Week and more. The National Outreach Coordinator (NOC) and National Astronomy Education Coordinator (NAEC) teams are addressing the substantial needs by engaging with various public and local

Figure 1: *Amateur astronomers from the Sirius Astronomy Association in Constantine gather for a field mission in the Hoggar mountain range in Algeria's Sahara Desert. Image Credit: Mourad Hamdouche*

Figure 2: *The Cameroon Astronomy and Space Research Organization (CASRO), headed by its CEO and Founder, Mbonteh Roland Ndunge, leads community members as they look through a telescope provided by IAU OAO partners Sterren Schitteren Voor Iedereen (Stars Shine for Everyone; SSVI) and Bresser. Image Credit: Mbonteh Roland Ndunge*

actors to integrate astronomy into national educational structures. Notably, a high-level public magazine produced by a dedicated team of amateurs and professionals, Echiheb el-Ilmi (The Scientific Meteor), has gained good recognition in the Arabic-speaking world. However, the academic program in astronomy is limited in scope and media exposure, sustained mainly at one research centre and two universities.

Figure 3: *Learners at a primary school in Cape Verde engage in activities about the Solar System. Image Credit: Ivanilda Maria Cabral*

Cameroon

Mbonteh Roland Ndunge (NOC), Williams Tchaptchet (Vice NOC; Incoming NOC), Dinka Williet (Deputy NOC)

The NOC Cameroon Team, driven by a deep curiosity about the Universe, has brought astronomy activities to Cameroon communities. This initiative has allowed people to think beyond their horizons and study with a higher perspective, thereby contributing to preserving our planet - our only home. Over the years, the NOC Cameroon Team has touched the lives of thousands of people, from young students to adults. In collaboration with the Cameroon Astronomy and Space Research Organization (CASRO), the Team has visited numerous schools, inspiring students in science through access to astronomy communication and providing them with the resources necessary to start their own astronomy clubs. Through programmes like ActInSpace, the NOC Cameroon Team fosters the country's development by promoting the technology and data used in the space sector to impact the next generation of astronomers and space entrepreneurs. The Team has also provided theoretical and practical training on satellite construction and using satellites to boost community development, improve agricultural practices, and address climate change.

Cape Verde

Ivanilda Maria dos Santos Cabral Semedo (NOC)

In Cape Verde, the National Outreach Coordinator Team has been developing several activities linked to teacher training, practical workshops and lectures with students from schools nationwide, day and night observation sessions with the general population, and art-science collaborations alongside other Portuguese-speaking NOCs. Through their efforts, the NOC Cape Verde Team reaches hundreds of teachers and thousands of students annually. The Team has a strong connection with Portuguese-speaking communities worldwide and leverages this common ground to promote astronomy. As participants in the OruMbya project, funded by the Office of Astronomy for Development, the NOC Cape Verde Team aims to build bridges between communities through a shared understanding of Indigenous cultures and their connection to the stars. They try to cement this sense of astronomical connection in the next generation of scientists and astronomy enthusiasts by engaging local students in the Dark Sky Rangers Light Pollution contest. Based out of Portugal, this contest encourages young learners to understand the consequences of light pollution on our night skies and environment and seek to define light pollution initiatives that might lead to change they can actualise in their lifetimes. With a dedication to collaboration and communal understanding, the NOC Cape Verde Team provides the island nation with valuable access and appreciation of the multifaceted nature of the Universe.

Côte d'Ivoire

Diaby Kassamba Abdel Aziz (NOC)

In Côte d'Ivoire, the NOC is involved in several activities to promote astronomy through the Ivorian Astronomy Association. This association was set up to promote science in general and space science in particular, and at a time when there were fewer people studying science. Since its creation in February 2021, the Ivorian Astronomy Association has carried out many activities in schools and for the general public. It has set up five astronomy clubs nationwide, reaching over 10,000 people. However, the Association is encountering enormous difficulties in implementing its action plan, as it is supported solely by the membership fees of its 50 members. Despite these difficulties, the Association has obtained support from associations in France with donations of telescopes and supplementary funding.

Egypt

Somaya Saad (NOC), Morcos Abd El Fady (Former NOC)

In Egypt, astronomy is vital in raising society's awareness of science and promoting the country's socioeconomic development. As astronomy is closely connected to many sciences and technical disciplines, it intersects with many aspects of society in and outside Egypt. The National Outreach Coordinator Team for Egypt leverages these features of astronomy to promote the uptake of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics among the nation's children and increase awareness of astronomy among the general public. Egypt is lucky to have multiple observational facilities that regularly communicate with the public, students, and children; through the rich historical and cultural context of Egypt, the NOC Team can draw many people to learn about their astronomical heritage. The Team regularly holds talks, workshops, interactive events, astronomy camps and more to enrich the lives of their communities. In particular, the NOC Egypt Team co-organises the Cairo International Book Fair, a two-week-long festival held every year featuring lectures and demonstrations of astronomical models.

Figure 4: *Each year in late February and October, the Sun is orthogonal to the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Abu Simbel, producing one of the most stunning examples of hierophany in the world. Image Credit: Mahmod Ismail/NRIAG*

Through this event alone, the Team can reach more than two million people. The National Outreach Coordinator Team in Egypt is a leader in making astronomy accessible to all nationwide.

Ethiopia

Alemiye Mamo Yacob (NOC), Kirubel Menberu (Deputy NOC; Incoming NOC)

Over the past decade, Ethiopia's National Outreach Coordinator Team has played a central role in advancing astronomy outreach efforts. Through close collaboration with the Ethiopian Space Science Society (ESSS), a non-governmental and non-profit organisation dedicated to outreach and capacity building, as well as the Space Science and Geospatial Institute (SSGI), the governmental space agency, NOC Ethiopia has effectively utilised ESSS's extensive network within schools and universities, along with SSGI's specialised expertise. Together with these local organisations, NOC Ethiopia has organised outreach activities, including school visits and public lecture events. This collaboration has enabled NOC Ethiopia to actively participate in and disseminate numerous projects initiated by the International Astronomical Union's Office for Astronomy Outreach (IAU OAO). These initiatives have included impactful projects such as NameExoworlds 2019, which achieved nationwide reach, and regional endeavours like the Dark Sky and Astro-tourism Outreach project involving five East African NOCs, funded by the OAO. Furthermore, NOC Ethiopia received a telescope courtesy of Stars Shine for Everyone (Sterren Schitteren voor Iedereen, SSVI) for its involvement in the 2018 and 2022 editions of the OAO project, 100 Hours of Astronomy - a pivotal instrument for future outreach endeavours. Beyond the OAO projects, NOC Ethiopia has collaborated extensively with the broader IAU community in Ethiopia, contributing significantly to initiatives led and funded by the Office for Astronomy Education and the Office of Astronomy for Development.

Ghana

Naomi Asabre Frimpong (Co-NOC), Albert Kuntu Forson (Co-NOC)

Under the leadership of Dr Naomi Asabre Frimpong, the National Outreach Coordinator (NOC) for the International Astronomical Union (IAU), alongside her dedicated team, astronomy outreach in Ghana witnessed a remarkable surge in 2023. Through innovative events like the 100 Days of Astronomy celebration on April 10th, where 40 students

Figure 5: *Families and staff from the Ghana Space Science and Technology Institute come together for an online viewing of the April Total Solar Eclipse at the Ghana Radio Astronomy Observatory. Image Credit: Naomi Asabre Frimpong*

from St. Martha's Catholic School Basic B engaged with a Galileo telescope, and SpaceJam 2023 on October 6th, hosted by the Ghana Space Science and Technology Institute (GSSTI) to mark World Space Week, engaging over 400 school children and 100 university students, the passion for space science among Ghanaians, especially the youth, was ignited. These efforts were amplified through national media coverage, with Dr Emmanuel Proven-Adziri and Dr Naomi Asabre Frimpong appearing on UTV and GBC television stations, advocating for astronomy education's significance in STEM and national development. Additionally, the Ghana Radio Astronomy Observatory hosted over 600 schoolchildren throughout the year for educational tours, introducing them to various observatory facilities and hands-on astronomy activities, further fostering their interest in STEM education. These strategic actions, coupled with the dedication of Dr Asabre Frimpong and her team, have laid a solid foundation for inspiring the next generation of scientists and innovators in Ghana. For young astronomers in Ghana, the journey to explore the Universe is only just beginning, and endless possibilities lay among the stars.

Libya

Amjed Khurwat (NOC), Abbas Endaisha (Former NOC)

In Libya, astronomy outreach is forging connections, from educating the locals about the desert's night sky to establishing the first space camp in historically rich sites like Cyrene, which aimed to promote peace and cultural exchange through astronomy education and communication. By using dynamic mediums such as podcasts, educational videos, and captivating sky camps, the National Outreach Coordinator Team for Libya and Roaya for Astronomy Foundation are breaking down barriers, fostering unity, and igniting curiosity across communities. In Libya, astronomy is not just about stargazing but building bridges that transcend borders, uniting us beneath the boundless sky.

Madagascar

Zara Randriamanakoto (NOC), Deralaza Rafieferantsoa (Vice NOC; Incoming NOC)

Making astronomy accessible to all has its own challenges, especially for communities in developing countries such as Madagascar. With support from local volunteers and various key stakeholders, the National Outreach Coordinator Team in Madagascar has been running several projects and initiatives to promote astronomy among the public since its appointment in 2017. This covers a wide range of activities, such as regular school visits, stargazing parties, and the use of social media for community digital outreach. In particular, the annual national Astro Quiz, Le Rendez-vous des Astrophiles, one of the Team's flagship projects, has been ongoing since 2020, with the 5th edition scheduled in September 2024. The competition, which targets school learners and the public at large, aims to improve awareness, interest, and knowledge of basic astronomy. The NOC Madagascar Team has also recently completed a successful project named Orion Astro Lab, in collaboration with the NOC Senegal Team, thanks to the financial support of the Office for Astronomy Outreach NOCs Funding Scheme. The project aims to build a strong network of astronomy club leaders who will work together to promote science, including astronomy, to the local community.

Morocco

Meriem El Yajouri (NOC), Hassane Darhmaoui (Vice NOC), Bani Abdelhafid (NOC Committee), Belhaj Zakaria (NOC Committee), Boskri Abdelkarim (NOC Committee), Chennaoui Hasnaa (NOC Committee), El Azhari Youssef (NOC Committee), Nail Naima (NOC Committee), Talibi Hassan (NOC Committee), Zouhair Benkhaldoun (Former NOC)

In Morocco, the NOC Team aims to uplift the work of local astronomy associations nationwide. At the African Astronomical Society Meeting 2024, the Team showcased these efforts at a dedicated exhibition space, allowing them to present their activities and introduce their initiatives to the international scientific and outreach community. The Team also engages the public through stargazing events, workshops for school children, and more, bringing participation from many associations across Morocco. Through the IAU OAO's partnerships, members of the broader NOC Morocco network have won telescopes, using them to bring astronomy into their own communities. One programme in particular - SpaceBus Morocco, designed to support earthquake-affected communities - highlights NOC Morocco's commitment to using astronomy as a tool for community wellness and rebuilding, addressing local needs while promoting science education.

Mozambique

Claudio Moises Paulo (NOC), Yara Herminia Simango (NOC Committee), Francisco Fenias Macucule (NOC Committee), Ramiro Caisse Saide (NOC Committee), Toivo Samuel Mabote (NOC Committee), Victoria Da Graça Gilberto Samboco (NOC Committee), Bívar Garcês Felizardo Chavango (NOC Team)

Mozambique is one of the African countries partnering with South Africa to implement the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) initiative in Africa. Since 2004, local scientists have tried to introduce Astronomy in the country, where outreach has played a crucial role. Here, we share the struggles and happiness of conducting outreach in a country with limited resources and present the successful results and future aspirations that can be used as a model for Africa's astronomy development. By using amateur telescopes in public places, schools and universities for almost 20 years, it was possible to motivate young people to pursue their careers in Astronomy, which brought Mozambique PhD students studying abroad and some people with MSc and PhD degrees as well as a post-doctoral fellow in the country. This opened a new environment at Eduardo Mondlane University, an important academic centre in

Figure 6: *Aligning with the International Day for Women and Girls in Science and the beginning of the OAO's Women and Girls in Astronomy Global Project, the NOC Mozambique, Claudio Paulo, helped to organise a lecture on women's contributions to science and astronomy that was attended by nearly 450 girls. Image Credit: Claudio Moises Paulo*

Mozambique. This attracted external funding that was used to establish the Computer Laboratory for Astronomy, Space Science and Artificial Intelligence at the UEM and the High-Performance Computing Facility at a Park of Science and Technology, paving the way for future astronomy development in Mozambique.

Nigeria

Peter Okagu (NOC), Timothy C. Egbuim (NOC Committee), Ojima Ocheni (NOC Committee), Onyeuwaoma Nnaemeka (Former NOC)

The National Outreach Coordinator Team in Nigeria is gradually transforming the current state of astronomy and space science, focusing on combating misinformation and motivating the next generation of space scientists in Nigeria and beyond. The Team has made substantial efforts to provide quality lectures, workshops, and hands-on sessions in astronomy and space sciences across varying levels of education, including special events for girls to learn about telescopes and astronomy, as well as events aimed at young children to expose them to the wonders of the Universe through activities, planetarium shows, and applications of astronomy in their daily lives. The NOC Nigeria Team engages schools in regular events through various channels, especially those in remote areas. As a result of the Team's intervention, there is increased knowledge and interest in astronomy, with the formation of new astronomy clubs demonstrating the Team's impact in schools. Of course, the Team's outreach activities extend beyond schools; they engage with the general public, non-scientific institutions, and space enthusiasts, inspiring awe and curiosity about the vastness of space in all individuals in Nigeria. Looking toward the future, the NOC Nigeria Team hopes to extend its work into more remote regions, correctional facilities, and internally displaced persons camps.

Figure 7: *Participants eagerly gather for a Moon sighting event, with the telescope aimed at the glowing Moon. The atmosphere is filled with anticipation and wonder as celestial enthusiasts marvel at the detailed craters and shadows on the lunar surface. Image Credit: Peter Okagu*

Figure 8: *School children gather around a solar telescope at a local primary school to observe and learn about the Sun. Image Credit: Salma Sylla*

Senegal

Salma Sylla (NOC), Abdoulaye BA (Vice NOC; incoming Co-NOC), Cheikh Tidiane Bop (Deputy NOC), Mariama Balde (Assistant NOC)

In Senegal, even if astronomy teaching in schools and universities is slow to take off, there are several activities promoting astronomy in the country. This is done primarily through associations and science clubs in secondary schools. In 2009, during the International Year of Astronomy, one of our universities had the opportunity to host astronomy lecturers, which sparked an interest in astronomy and astronomy outreach nationwide. Since then, we have been organising outreach activities to encourage the younger generation to take an interest in and learn about astronomy. In 2019, Salma Sylla joined the Office for Astronomy Outreach network as part of Senegal's National Outreach Coordinator Team. Together, this team of four planned and carried out many activities. For example, we worked with Madagascar on a project funded by the OAO to train future astronomy club leaders in both countries, which led to the formation of 20 new astronomy clubs.

We have additionally held events with telescopes provided by Stars Shine for Everyone (Sterren Schitteren voor Iedereen, SSVI), online workshops for teachers in collaboration with the Network for Astronomy School Education, and participated in OAO Global Projects, such as 100 Hours of Astronomy and NameExoWorlds. Recently, for the first time in Senegal, we have organised astronomy workshops at an inclusive school with deaf and mute children, demonstrating the inclusive role of astronomy. This was initiated in a collaborative program between Senegal and Belgium, "SeneSTEM," to promote science through astronomy. We want to expand it at a national scale, reaching the most disadvantaged areas of the country.

Sudan

Mohammed Yahya Alradi Eldaw (NOC), Banona Osman (Vice NOC), Abubakr Yagob (Deputy NOC), Eshraga Adel Altyp Abdelsalam (Assistant NOC), Hozyfa Ahmad Brima (NOC Committee), Abubkr Mastor (NOC Committee), Ismail Abdallah (NOC Committee), Nasreldin Adam (NOC Committee), Hoyam Abubaker Yousif (NOC Committee), Yassir Abbas (NOC Committee), Anwar Osman (NOC Committee), Elnazir Ishag (NOC Committee), Khalid Omer (NOC Committee), Magdi Elfadil (NOC Committee), Abdallah Osman (NOC Committee), Omer Souliman (NOC Committee), Mohammed Mahgoub Hussain (NOC Committee), Mohammed Hussain (NOC Committee)

The National Outreach Coordinator Team in Sudan is a leader in promoting astronomy nationwide. Through monthly lunar observations to inform local religious institutions, inner city and rural outreach events, television programmes, and nationwide astronomy campaigns, the NOC Sudan has continued to engage their communities in astronomy despite ongoing political unrest. Armed with the knowledge that a truly dark sky is an ideal way to pique the public's interest in astronomy, the NOC Sudan leads trips to rural areas of the country to give inner-city inhabitants the opportunity to experience the night sky without the intrusion of city lights and discuss the culture and history of astronomy. Another project aims to encourage students to pursue astronomy as a career by showcasing STEM's sustainability and business potential. Together, these activities aim to promote capacity building throughout Sudan for future generations and encourage today's researchers to go into their communities and help them understand and appreciate the night sky.

Togo

Doh Koffi Addor (NOC)

The amazement and questions that come from observing a starry sky or participating in practical demonstrations with the simple equipment we have at our disposal is an extraordinary opportunity to communicate science in general, and astronomy in particular, to a Togolese population that does not have access to scientific knowledge and concepts about the Universe. In our first actions to promote astronomy in Togo in 2017, we set up a simple telescope directly on the streets, in schoolyards and public squares, inviting passers-by to look through the eyepiece at the Moon and the Sun. Through these initiatives, the public could talk with experts, tell stories, learn, and explore their imaginations as they unravelled the mysteries of our Universe. The National Outreach Coordinator and National Astronomy Education Coordinator teams work in tandem to popularise and promote astronomy in Togo. We have organised many activities, such as Astronomy Days in Togo, Togolese Astronomy Olympiads, Teacher Training Workshops, and more. We have carried out these activities in different formats to reach as many people as possible and popularise astronomy among the population. Though we have faced challenges through patience, determination, and passion for astronomy, we have continued to promote astronomy nationwide. Our efforts have resulted in a significant milestone for Togo: negotiations are underway with the Togolese educational authorities to officially introduce astronomy to secondary school and university-level curricula.

Tunisia

Mayssa El Yazidi (NOC), Moslem Hassiki (Vice NOC), Imen Titouhi (Deputy NOC), Farah Hani (Assistant NOC), Sana Ayari (NOC Committee), Khaled Segni (NOC Committee), Tayssir Ennafti (NOC Committee), Jamel El Jeri (NOC Committee), Ranya Hamdeni (NOC Committee), Riadh Ben Nessib (NOC Committee), Lina Jardak (NOC Committee), Wael Jomni (NOC Committee), Asma Bdhief (NOC Committee), Ahlem Loudhaief (NOC Committee), Yassine Tahri (NOC Committee), Samaher Ben El hadj Slimene (NOC Committee), Lassad Akrout (NOC Committee), Olfa Mannai (NOC Committee), Sami Elouati (NOC Committee), Ahmed El Fadhel (NOC Committee), Zayneb Jouini (NOC Committee), Amine Zribi (NOC Committee), Taha Basly (NOC Committee), Amjed Bachtobji (NOC Committee), Zied Mejri (NOC Committee)

One of the main goals of the NOC Tunisia Team is to promote astronomy nationwide and ensure all Tunisians understand its importance to everyday life and society. Since 2018, the NOC Tunisia Team has worked alongside the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach, Sterren Schitteren Voor Iedereen (Stars Shine For Everyone), and NOCs from around the world to provide many projects and initiatives, both in person and online. We have organised astronomy training sessions, open days, summer schools, solar and deep sky observation sessions, and workshops in collaboration with several astronomy clubs and associations in Tunisia. For example, the programme AstroTalk aims to deliver online lectures to students and amateur astronomers. This project has been in operation since

Figure 9: ***(a)*** *The NOC Morocco Team, co-organisers of the Festival of Ifrane, engaged the public through astronomy through innovative hands-on exhibits, like the one shown here. Image Credit: Meriem El Yajouri* ***(b)*** *In collaboration with the physics department at Misurata University, the NOC Libya Team helped to raise awareness of astronomy and space in society among all participants in the 2022 International Children's Exhibition. Image Credit: Amjed Khurwat* ***(c)*** *In Tunisia, the NOC Team gathered young children to learn about astronomy and space through art during the IAU OAO 100 Hours of Astronomy celebration 2021. Image Credit: Mayssa El Yazidi* ***(d)*** *The Ethiopian NOC Team regularly engages its communities in accessible activities. Here, the NOC Ethiopia presents a series of tactile models aimed at conveying astronomical topics to people with blindness or low vision. Image Credit: Alemiye Mamo* ***(e)*** *Despite the challenges faced by their communities, Mohammed Yahya Alradi Eldaw and Anwar Osman of the NOC Sudan Team find ways to bring new experiences to local children, such as their programme entitled Astronomy for Children and Students, shown here. Image Credit: Mohammed Yahya Alradi Eldaw*


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2020, and in 2021, it won first prize in the OAO Astronomy@Home Awards in the Outstanding Online Events category. In 2019 and 2022, the NOC Tunisia Team successfully named an exoplanet and its star in the NameExoWorlds competition: in 2019, Chechia (star) and Khomsa (exoplanet); in 2022, Zembra (star) and Zembretta (exoplanet). The Team has also been awarded a telescope from SSVI and BRESSER, equipped with a complete set of optics and a CCD, which has been used to support many communities, including astronomy clubs, amateur astronomy societies, and universities. From its foundation, the NOC Tunisia Team has reached thousands of people across Tunisia, helping and supporting them to learn more about the Universe and the planet on which they live.

Biography

Jamal Mimouni is an Algerian astrophysicist involved with the scientific, societal, and cultural dimensions of the contemporary scientific debate in the Arab-Muslim world. He has developed a keen interest in the philosophy of contemporary science and in advancing scientific culture, and astronomy in particular, in the Arab World and Africa. He is also the past president of the African Astronomical Society (AfAS).

Mbonteh Roland Ndunge is a Cameroonian astronomer and astrophysicist. He is dedicated to promoting astronomy education in Cameroon and is the founder of the Cameroon Astronomy and Space Research Organization (CASRO).

Ivanilda Maria dos Santos Cabral Semedo has a PhD in Statistics and Risk Management, a master´s degree and a degree in Mathematics. She is a Professor at the University of Cabo Verde, member of the National Statistics Council, Coordinator of the PLOAD (Portuguese Language Office of Astronomy for Development) in Cabo Verde, statistics consultant and science communicator. Her research focuses on extreme statistics.

Kassamba Abdel Aziz Diaby is an Ivorian space physicist holding a PhD in geomagnetism and aeronomy. His research work is about the interaction between the Sun and the Earth. He studies the variations of the Earth magnetic field due to solar activity, the estimation of the ionosphere daytime equatorial vertical drift and the Earth magnetosphere. In addition to his researche, Aziz is highly involved in astronomy outreach in his country. He is the founder and president of the Ivorian Astronomy Association and he has set up many astronomy clubs in secondary schools. All of his efforts have enabled him to become the National Outreach Coordinator for Côte d'Ivoire at the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO).

Somaya Saad is an Egyptian astrophysicist at the National Research Institute of Astronomy and Geophysics (NRIAG). Her main interest is studying the physics of hot massive stars and she collaborated globally in this direction. As one of the pioneers in this field, she leads a research group studying variable stars at the Kottamia Astronomical Observatory. In addition to her scientific interests, she is highly involved in the IAU, AfAS and AfNWA activities, and she strives to achieve the SDGs in supporting women, girls and marginalised groups in Egyptian and Arab societies through the concepts of diversity, inclusion and equity.

Alemiye Mamo Yacob is an astronomer and science communicator by profession. He works as a researcher and Regional Partnership Lead Executive at the Space Science and Geospatial Institute (SSGI) in Ethiopia, and is also the Coordinator of the East Africa Regional Office of Astronomy for Development (EA-ROAD). He is among the few individuals who have laid the foundation for space science development in Ethiopia.

Kirubel Menberu is pursuing an MSc in Space Engineering and holds a BSc in Electromechanical Engineering. He is a dedicated advocate for space science and a science communicator, currently serving as the Program Manager at the Ethiopian Space Science Society (ESSS), the National Point of Contact for Ethiopia at the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC), and National Outreach Coordinator for Ethiopia at the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO).

Naomi Asabre Frimpong is a research scientist at the Ghana Space Science and Technology Institute and Head of Science Communication at Ghana Space Science and Technology Institute. Her research interests include the evolution of massive young stellar objects using complex organic molecules. She is very active in outreach to young people - especially girls - and mentoring other African students.

Amjed Khurwat is a science communicator and civil society activist from Libya, focusing on media and information literacy and the impact of science on sustainable community development.

Zara Randriamanakoto is a research staff astronomer at the South African Astronomical Observatory. She mainly studies the most massive star clusters in the local universe. She is passionate about science engagement, the promotion of Girls and Women in STEM, and especially the advancement of astronomy in all its aspects in her home country (Madagascar) and Africa.

Meriem El Yajouri is an astronomer and an ambassador of astronomy for outreach and development. She leads scientific communication as president of Spacebus Morocco and co-founder of TITRITLAND, Morocco's first astro-tourism company. She also served as the vice president of the Atlas Dark Sky Foundation and chaired the 4th AfAS annual conference. Her research focuses on interstellar matter in star-forming regions through major astronomical programs, including those by the JWST.

Claudio Moises Paulo is an Assistant Professor of astrophysics at Eduardo Mondlane University and the Coordinator of the Astrophysics, Space Sciences & Artificial Intelligence Group. In his free time, he dedicates himself to the dissemination of science using Astronomy.

Peter Okagu is a scientific officer, a Science Communicator, and the Head of the Outreach Unit of the NASRDA Centre for Basic Space Science and Astronomy Nsukka. I am dedicated to promoting astronomy education and outreach in Nigeria. I am active in popularising science and astronomy among young people and the general public, promoting girls in STEM, and mentoring young amateur astronomers in Nigeria.

Salma Sylla is an astrophysicist and computer engineering technologist with a background in atomic and nuclear physics. In addition to her research, she is involved in popularising science and astronomy and promoting girls in STEM. She is a board member of the African Network for Women in Astronomy (AfNWA) and a member of the Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD).

Mohammed Yahya Alradi Eldaw is a Sudanese astronomer whose research focuses on space weather and climate action regarding astronomical activities and phenomena and Indigenous peoples' knowledge of Astronomy.

Doh Koffi Addor is a geological engineer and amateur astronomer. He is passionate about everything concerning Earth and Space, and he founded the ONG Science Géologique pour un Développement Durable -SG2D (Geological Science for Sustainable Development NGO) and the Association Togolaise d'Astronomie (Togolese Association of Astronomy) for the development of Earth and Space Sciences in Togo. He is very active in outreach and education in Astronomy and Space Sciences in Togo, especially for young Togolese.

Mayssa El Yazidi is a planetary geologist. Her research focuses on surface geology, geomorphology, and tectonic and structural analysis of Mars, Mercury, and Venus.