

What are the IAU Outreach Programmes?

The IAU Outreach Programmes are IAU-driven outreach programmes that engage the public in astronomy through access to astronomical information and the communication of the science of astronomy. These programmes encourage astronomical outreach through IAU member engagement with the public, relationships between professional-amateur astronomers, and citizen science activities. These initiatives strive to include those from different backgrounds and with different abilities to participate and learn about the science of astronomy.

Who can join the IAU Outreach Programmes?

Anyone can join the IAU Outreach Programmes. The IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO) vision is to bring astronomy to all. The OAO welcomes collaborations with both professional astronomers and astronomy enthusiasts who share the same goals of creating a diverse and inclusive global astronomical community.



Who runs the IAU Outreach Programmes?

Since 2012, the IAU outreach initiatives have been centrally coordinated by the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO). The OAO is a joint project of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) and the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan (NAOJ), under the auspices of the National Institutes of Natural Sciences (NINS) of Japan. The OAO is based in Tokyo, on NAOJ's Mitaka Campus. The OAO team coordinates a comprehensive programme of outreach initiatives to reach targeted audiences worldwide. These initiatives are disseminated and implemented at a national level by the IAU National Outreach Coordinators to ensure maximum reach.

This year, 2022, marks the 10th anniversary of the Office for Astronomy Outreach. In celebration, we have scaled up many of our Annual IAU Outreach Programmes, and initiated some new Special IAU Outreach Programmes. Read on to find out more.

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) is the largest international organisation of professional astronomers. The mission of the IAU is to promote and safeguard the science of astronomy in all its aspects (research, communication, education and development) through international cooperation.



Nuit des étoiles – Tunisia. Credit: Société Astronomique de Tunisie



www.iau.org/public/



public@oao.iau.org



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IAU Outreach Initiatives 2022



Year-long IAU Outreach Programmes

Our Year-long IAU Outreach Programmes are projects that we support and endorse throughout the year.

Meet the IAU Astronomers!

Through the Meet the IAU Astronomers! programme, amateur astronomers, informal educators, and teachers can bring an IAU member astronomer into a meet-up to talk to students, parents, and the general public about astronomy, the importance of astronomy for society, and choosing astronomy as a career.



100 Hours of Astronomy, India. Credit: Neelam Mishra

Women and Girls in Astronomy

This project focuses on women and girls in astronomy by supporting events that recognise the role of women in advancing science and encouraging girls to consider careers in astronomy.

The IAU strongly encourages activities throughout the year. In addition, between two International Days adopted by the United Nations – the International Day of Women and Girls in Science on February 11 and the International Women's Day on March 8 – the OAO hosts a dedicated Annual IAU Outreach Programme.

Inclusive Outreach

The IAU OAO is dedicated to ensuring that astronomy is truly for everyone. Toward this end, we strive to make all our programmes diverse, inclusive, equitable, and accessible.

This project is a collaboration between the OAO and the IAU Executive Committee Working Group on Astronomy for Equity and Inclusion.

Annual IAU Outreach Programmes

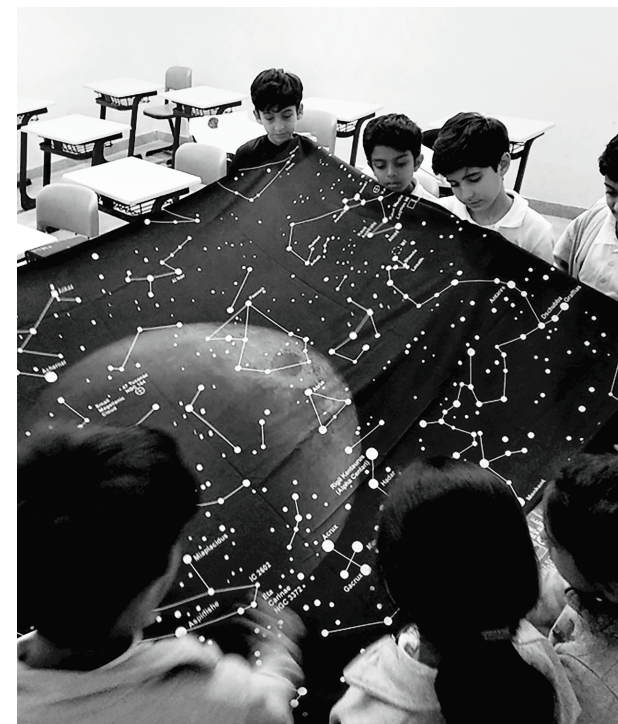
The Annual IAU Outreach Programmes are celebrated at certain times each year and are sometimes associated with International Days adopted by the United Nations. These programmes can be implemented by independent organisers that wish to join the IAU outreach initiatives.

Dark and Quiet Skies

The Dark and Quiet Skies project raises awareness about the need to preserve dark and quiet skies. Through the project, people can learn about the importance of dark skies for human culture, heritage, and health, as well as the use of dark and quiet skies for astronomy research. The effort encourages activities worldwide on and around the UNESCO International Day of Light on May 16, and participation in Globe at Night, an international citizen-science campaign to raise public awareness of the impact of light pollution.

The IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (IAU OAO) conducts this project in collaboration with the IAU Commission B7 and other various partners.

Pale Blue Dot Celebrations in Pakistan. Credit: Ahmad Kamal Janjua



100 Hours of Astronomy

100 Hours of Astronomy occurs each October over four days and four nights. We invite everyone to take part in 100 consecutive hours packed full of astronomy-related events around the world. During this project, amateur and professional astronomers, astronomy enthusiasts, and the general public share their knowledge and enthusiasm for the Universe. The goal is to enable as many people as possible, especially children, to engage with the sky and gain a basic understanding of the Universe.

Special IAU Outreach Programmes

Under One Sky

A legacy of the IAU100 celebrations, and thanks to the generous support of Leiden Observatory and the NWO Communication Award 2020, Under One Sky supports projects that use cultural astronomy, astronomy outreach, and astronomy communication to recognize Indigenous knowledge and respect Indigenous learning systems with a rights-based approach to Indigenous learning.

NameExoWorlds

NameExoWorlds offers the opportunity for astronomy enthusiasts to name one exoplanet and its host star. In celebration of the 10-year anniversary of the Office for Astronomy Outreach, the OAO will host a special edition of NameExoWorlds, wherein twenty ExoWorlds will be named from the JWST target list.

This project is a collaboration between the OAO and the IAU Executive Committee Working Group on Exoplanetary System Nomenclature.

Webb Space Telescope Public Engagement and Outreach Activities

The lead-up to the release of JWST's first images has sparked an incredible amount of public engagement and outreach activities around the globe. Together with NASA and the Webb team, the OAO hosted a training programme and workshop on JWST's first images, encouraging our National Outreach Coordinators to develop special outreach activities.

Astronomy Day in Schools, Indonesia. Credit: Bosscha Observatory

Telescopes for All

Developed in partnership with Sterren Schitteren Voor Iedereen (SSVI, Stars Shine for Everyone), Telescopes for All distributes telescopes signed by astronauts and scientists – including Nobel Prize winners – to underserved communities around the world. The project encourages applications that broaden the horizons of children, adults, and outreach professionals, sparking an interest in science and raising awareness for equal opportunities in pursuing careers in astronomy.



Join Us

If you are a professional astronomer...

We invite you to join the Meet the IAU Astronomers! programme. You can contact your IAU National Outreach Coordinator (NOC) for advice or to share new ideas to further promote astronomy in your region. You can, for example, work with your local NOC to organise citizen science activities under any of the IAU Outreach Programmes for your local community.

If you are an amateur astronomer...

We offer a number of programmes to connect amateur astronomy groups with professional astronomers (e.g. Meet the IAU Astronomers!) and resources to enhance the outreach you may do with community groups (e.g., Telescopes for All). We encourage you to plan events around our IAU Annual Outreach Programmes, so your community members can be a part of a global event. You can also contact your IAU National Outreach Coordinator (NOC) for further support in your country.

50 Years: First Man on the Moon, Thailand. Credit: Hathaichanok Therdthampaisal



Space Art Workshop – Pakistan. Credit: Yumna Majeed

If you are an outreach professional...

You can find various initiatives under the the different IAU Outreach Programmes and get assistance with relevant and exciting topics for you and your community.

If you want to share your activities...

You can register your event in our IAU Outreach Event Calendar.

If you have a new idea...

You can contact the IAU National Outreach Coordinator (NOC) for your country and propose your ideas for outreach initiatives in your country or region.

IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach Outreach Partners

