eGY-Africa NEWS No. 2

eGY-Africa Website

eGY-Africa is using a section of the eGY website: http://www.egy.org/egyafrica.php. Information about eGY-Africa can be downloaded from the website, including presentation materials and drafts of working documents.

IUGG Grant

The International Union of Geodesy & Geophysics is the main direct sponsor of eGY-Africa. IUGG has awarded a grant of USD10,000 towards the cost of running a workshop on eGY-Africa and the Digital Divide issue. The workshop is planned for November 2009, provisionally in Abidjan. We are currently seeking partners to run the Workshop jointly and share costs.

eGY and IHY come to a close

Two of the four international science years have ended officially – the Electronic Geophysical Year, 2007-2008 (www.egy.org) ended on 31st December 2008, and the International Heliophysical Year (http://ihy2007.org/) came to a close on February 18, 2009 at a ceremony at the United Nations in Vienna, Austria. Several eGY and IHY follow-on activities will continue for the next few years, including eGY-Africa. Longer-term IHY efforts will focus on the transition to the new International Space Weather Initiative (http://www2.nict.go.jp/y/y223/sept/IHY/ISWI.pdf), which will continue the highly successful collaboration between the heliophysics science community and the United Nations Basic Space Science (UNBSS) program.

Meetings attended by eGY-Africa participants

The following meetings at which eGY-Africa issues were raised were attended by members of our community. Email contacts are included in case you need more information.

(1) GIRAF 2009 Workshop "Geoscience Information in Africa", Windhoek, 16-20 March, 2009. http://www.bgr.bund.de/cln_092/nn_1205280/GIRAF2009/EN/Home/giraf2009__node.html?__nnn=true Contact: Colin Reeves reeves.earth@planet.nl

(2) Physics in Africa at the American Physical Society meeting, Pittsburg, 16 March 2009. Contact: Abebe Kibede abkebede@gmail.com

(3) Euro-Africa ICT Forum, Brussels, 24-25 March 2009. http://euroafrica-ict.org/events/forum.php. Contact: Monique Petitdidier monique.petitdidier@latmos.ipsl.fr

IHY-Africa SCINDA Workshop, Livingstone, June 7-11, 2009

The IHY Africa 2009 Workshop (http://www.unza.zm/ihyafrica2009/ihy.htm) will be held at the New Fairmount Hotel in Livingstone, Zambia. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the SCINDA 2009 workshop. Topics of focus in this Workshop include: GPS Total Electron Content; Ionospheric Irregularities/Scintillation; Heliospace Physics; Electrodynamics/ Magnetometer and Plasmasphere; and Space Science Education and Public Outreach. Several eGY-Africa participants will be attending. Victor Chukwuma will give a talk about eGY-Africa and the Digital Divide issue and run a special discussion meeting on *Infrastructure and Communications*. Rabiu Babatunde will run another special discussion meeting about the *African Geospace Society* (www.arcsstee.org/ags.html).

Resolutions and Declarations

Many bodies have passed resolutions and declarations about the benefits to science and development in Africa of participation in the information revolution, and the need to deal with the Digital Divide issue. A list of these is being prepared for the aGY-Africa website. Recent additions were passed by:

- o ICSU at the ICSU General Assembly, Maputo, October 2008.
- o CODATA at the CODATA International Conference, Kiev, October 2008
- o CODATA passed the following resolution at its General Assembly, Maputo, The resolution originated from eGY-Africa.
- o IPY, IHY, IYPE, and eGY at the IGY+50 Summit, Tsukuba, Japan, 13 November 2008 - "The Tsukuba Declaration".

Visualizations of internet connectivity

Les Cottrell of the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory and his colleagues have produced:

(1) http://www.symmetrymagazine.org/cms/?pid=1000639 - an animation of Africa's "Internet weather". The continent is bright yellow, and as the video runs, pale red dots flicker across its surface. The dots represent Internet connectivity measured from April 2007 to March 2008. The paler the dot, the slower the connection, and the more the dots flicker, the more unstable the connection is.

(2) http://www-iepm.slac.stanford.edu/pinger/pinger-metrics-motion-chart.html. A bubble/scatter plot that visualizes throughput (y), avg RTT (x), population (size of bubble), and Region (color) as a function of time from 1998 to 2007. You can choose various PingER metrics including: Average RTT, min RTT, jitter, loss, throughput, unreachability, plus other more generic metrics such as Population, Internet users, Human Development Index, Digital Opportunity Index. You can select the monitoring site as being SLAC (California), CERN (Switzerland) or ICTP (Italy) and you can view the data for all regions of the world or select for a single regions..

PROFILE – One Laptop Per Child

(Each issue of the Newsletter will feature a profile of an organization or program of relevance to eGY-Africa)

Website: www.olpc.org
Founder and Chairman: Nicholas Negroponte, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, MA.
Mission: to provide educational opportunities for the world's poorest children by providing each child with a rugged, low-cost, low-power, connected laptop with content and software designed for collaborative, joyful, self-empowered learning.
Activities. To date, OLPC has put over 500,000 XO laptops into the hands of children all across the world. The One Laptop per Child association developed a low-cost laptop -- the "XO Laptop" -- to revolutionize how we educate the world's children.

OLPCorps summer grant program

(This is an abbreviated version of OLPC's announcement.)
OLPC is beginning a summer grant program in which up to 100 teams of university students from around the world will distribute thousands of XO laptops to children in Africa this summer. Partnering with schools and non-governmental organizations in Africa, undergraduate and graduate students from around the world will provide educational opportunities that facilitate self-expression and exploration for children.

Student Teams will:
• travel to one of the 53 African countries of their choosing for 9-10 weeks working directly with local community partners to integrate the XO into primary education
• participate in a 10-day orientation in Kigali, Rwanda at OLPC's office, June 8-17
• receive up to $10,000 per team for operating costs
• deploy 100 XO laptops, including hardware and support
• collaborate with up to 100 other teams as part of a life-long global network empowering a generation
• send a representative to MIT/OLPC's all-expense paid summit from October 10-12, 2009.

The program represents a determined effort by OLPC to engage university students worldwide in bringing an education revolution to children living in some of the most remote places on Earth. By empowering students from a multitude of countries and cultures to act as agents of change, the belief that all children have a right to quality education -- regardless of where they happen to live -- will spread across the globe.

If you are an undergraduate or graduate student with an interest in education, technology or capacity building, our summer grant program will provide you with unprecedented hands-on experience.

The OLPCorps program features a high level of local community involvement, as local schools and NGOs will sustain the project for years to come. OLPCorps Africa Members will be active members of our innovative 1-to-1 laptop-learning project and hold key roles as leaders in our grassroots movement. The OLPC summer grant program, which is a full-time commitment, begins June 8. Teams will work closely with the One Laptop per Child team to design and implement XO deployments, join a uniquely African OLPC network, and lead a growing social movement.
How to apply: for more information on OLPCorps Africa and specific application requirements, please visit our website: http://laptop.org/en/participate/get-involved/OLPCorps.shtml.
Proposals must be received by March 27th. Contact OLPCorps (OLPCorps@laptop.org) with any questions or concerns.

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE and SUBSCRIBE

Contributions to eGY-Africa News are welcome. Contributions should be brief, preferably with a link or pointer to where the reader can find more detailed information. Please send your contribution to the editors: alemmeb@googlemail.com and cebarton@gmail.com.au

If you wish to receive the newsletter, or cancel your subscription, please send an email to the above email addresses. Past copies of the newsletter can be downloaded from the eGY website: www.egy.org > eGY-Africa > Newsletters.

CB and AM 21 March 2009