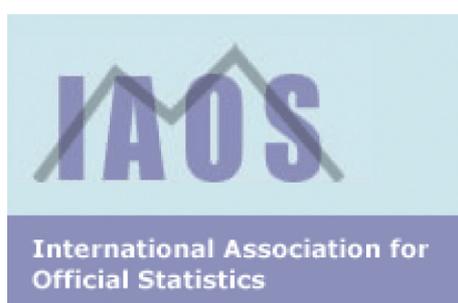


IAOS General Assembly August 2013 Report of the President for 2011 to 2013



In my incoming Presidential address two years ago I made two points about the IAOS.

FIRST, it is the International Association for Official Statistics, not the International Association of Official Statisticians. As such it is a unique opportunity for all those who value official statistics to come together and discuss issues of interest and concern. SECOND, it is a professional organisation, outside the control of governments. And I set out some of the benefits from all this.

I pledged to use the opportunities of our conferences and the next Nominating Committee to broaden our membership and leadership. I also looked to build on and consolidate the work of my predecessors, make our procedures effective and sustainable, run the Association using an open and transparent approach, and use our web site to communicate with our members.

I also wanted to develop a budget strategy that improved our effectiveness and helped deliver our mission.

The first thing the new Executive Committee did was to develop a strategy for delivering its mission. It is on the web site and includes a set of priorities for the two years of my Presidency. They were:

- delivering successful conferences and workshops;
- developing and supporting the membership;
- producing successful publications and communications; and
- improving our effectiveness.

These are fairly modest goals, but we thought them to be within our limited capability: that of a voluntary Executive Committee with a small amount of office support. Against each of these priorities we have developed a work plan, again on the web site and updated each year. So what have we done against each of these headings? This report gives an overview of progress.

A. Conferences and workshops

1. *'Getting our messages across' in Kiev, Ukraine, 12 to 14 September 2012*

The IAOS 2012 conference, attended by 160 delegates from 53 countries, plus over a hundred from the Ukraine, focused on the need to distil and disseminate simple messages from official statistics using modern approaches and technology. There was a high level of discussion and engagement. The main themes were:

- Statistical story telling;
- Enhancing access to information;
- Marketing, promotion and customer focus;
- New information media; and
- Statistical literacy.

The conference papers are on the IAOS web site at <http://isi.cbs.nl/iaos/conferences/2012KievPapers.htm>.

The conference led to lively debates on these topical subjects and was successful in attracting a large number of delegates not already members of IAOS, giving us a platform for expanding our membership. A selection of the papers is being prepared for our Journal.

2. *Training course for official statisticians, Kiev, 11 September 2012*

The opportunity of the IAOS conference was taken to hold a training event primarily aimed at young statisticians on the day before the main conference, attended by 46 participants, mainly from the Ukraine and the CIS region.

3. Governance workshop, Kiev, 11 September 2012

As is becoming traditional, a governance workshop for Director Generals in the region of the host NSI was held the day before the Kiev conference. This was valued by participants. A report and the papers are here: <http://isi.cbs.nl/iaos/conferences/2012KievGovernanceWorkshop.htm>.

4. WSC Hong Kong 2013

I am grateful to Hilka Vihavainen for the work she has done to ensure we have a good selection of topics and papers for the 2013 WSC in Hong Kong, including discussions on quality, modernising business statistics, social accounts, and a core skills framework for official statisticians.

5. Joint workshop with IASE 'Statistics education for progress' in Macau, 22 to 24 August 2013

We have worked with IASE on the joint workshop 'Statistics education for progress' in Macau. The Friday (23 August) of this satellite conference was a joint IASE/IAOS session promoting collaboration between official statistics and statistical education under the title 'Youth and Official Statistics'. I am grateful to Sharleen Forbes for her work in coordinating the IAOS papers for this workshop. Read more at <http://www.conkerstatistics.co.uk/iase2013/>.

Shigeru Kawasaki, the President-elect, will update you on plans for the 2014 IAOS conference shortly. We have appointed Rolando Ocampo (INEGI, Mexico) to be the IAOS representative on the Programme Committee for WSC 2015 in Rio.

B. Developing and supporting the membership

Young Statisticians Prize (YSP)

The prize has been put on a regular, sustainable basis, and is now awarded annually. The number of submissions has increased over the last few years with a record 35 entries this year. In addition to monetary prizes for up to three winning papers, each year the author (or a co-author) of the paper winning first prize receives funds for travel and accommodation to present the paper at the World Statistics Conference or the IAOS conference. This year, in honour of the International Year of Statistics, funding was provided so that authors

of all three winning papers could present them at WSC Hong Kong.

I have become a member of the ISI Advisory Board on Professional Ethics and we provided opportunities for discussion on this important topic at the last IAOS conference.

Membership campaign

Following a dip in the number of members, individual *membership* began to grow again in the last three years, and is now back to around 300, with much of the growth coming from less-developed countries. The number of institutional members has been steady at just under 40. Both figures are far below their potential.

The Executive Committee embarked on a membership campaign in 2012. This had several phases. Firstly a new membership leaflet, clarifying the benefits of individual membership was designed and placed on the web site. [http://isi.cbs.nl/iaos/IAOS_leaflet_revised_10.2.12\[1\].pdf](http://isi.cbs.nl/iaos/IAOS_leaflet_revised_10.2.12[1].pdf).

This leaflet has been used at various conferences. All non-members who registered for the IAOS 2012 conference in Kiev were contacted and invited to join. This has resulted in around 24 new members. We have now clarified our fee structure for people joining part way through the year: half rate for those joining after 30 June and free for those joining after 31 October (and paying for the following year).

Most recently we have begun to focus on institutional members. Again we have clarified the benefits, including reduced rate registration fees for up to two staff members to our conferences, and have written to all NSIs not currently members.

We have continued to encourage members to get involved with the work of the Association.

C. Publications and communications

During 2011 and 2012 the *Statistical Journal of IAOS* began to increase the rate of progress in publishing papers compared with earlier years. In 2011 we published special issues on Ethics and Statistical Literacy. In 2012 we published a special issue on Health Statistics, and a general issue in memory of Frank Nolan, partly drawing on papers presented at Dublin and on prize winning Young Statisticians papers. We have this month published the first 2013 issue.

Dr Frank Nolan took over as Editor-in-Chief in January 2011 from Siu-Ming Tam, but died unexpectedly

in October 2012. I took over as interim Editor-in-Chief and led the search for a new incumbent. I was delighted that Fritz Scheuren agreed to take over the baton and become the new Editor-in-Chief in April this year. The rate of publication continues to increase under Fritz with his first issue already published, and two further issues at an advanced stage: one on Statistical Leadership including interviews with leading official statisticians and commemorating the International Year of Statistics, and a further issue, based on the Kiev IAOS 2012 conference 'Getting you messages across', planned for November. Our aim is to move to four quarterly issues and to use the WSC Hong Kong as an opportunity to increase our readership.

The IAOS Executive Committee has begun to think about publishing arrangements post 2015 and has agreed to set up a Publishing Committee at this General Assembly to develop a draft future strategy for the Statistical Journal.

The growth of publishing on the web has led to a questioning of the current subscription based publishing model used by many professional journals. Currently many journals are accessed through the web only by the reader paying an online access fee. The Open Access movement has argued against this model, saying that research undertaken by public agencies should not be charged for 'twice'. That is, if the taxpayer has funded the research on which an article has been based, the public should not then have to pay to read the article. Their argument is that the author not the reader should pay the publishing costs. The implication of this for IAOS need to be considered.

The *website* needs regular management to ensure it is up to date and its potential is used. I am pleased that Nancy McBeth is leading the work on this, though I know she is keen to have some help.

We have kept in touch with our members by regularly posting items on our web site and producing a 'Members update' after each Executive Committee with links to new information items. These are at <http://isi.cbs.nl/iaos/newsletter.htm>.

D. Improving effectiveness

We have reviewed our Statutes, to bring them into line with Dutch law and changes in the ISI statutes. We have also sought to make them align more closely with how we currently work. The changes were subject to a consultation through our web site last winter and have recently been put to a formal vote. 27% of the membership voted, with 96 in favour and only one against.

Up-to-date budgets and estimates of expenditure are now produced. The latest figures are in our *financial report*. A strategy for future management of reserves has been agreed. This enabled increased support to be given to conferences and workshops. We have had discussions with the Standing Conference on Regional and Urban Statistics (SCORUS), a part of the IAOS, on financial support and have given them a grant of €1,000 in each of the last two years. This has enabled them to develop a new web site www.scorus.org.

The Executive Committee met five times a year in the last two years, usually by telephone, but also in the margins of the UN Statistical Commission in New York and at the WSC or IAOS conferences. Our minutes are published on the web site, and we publish an update for members after each meeting.

In accordance with our statutes, we set up a Nominating Committee for the 2013–15 Executive Committee, and I am pleased to announce that the following will serve with the incoming President, Shigeru Kawasaki as the Executive Committee for 2013 to 2015:

Ola Awad, (President-elect), President of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
 Mario Palma, Vice President, INEGI, Mexico
 Angela Me, Chief, Research and Trend Analysis Branch, United Nations Vienna
 Yasin Elhag Abdin, Director General, Sudan
 Steve Landefeld, Director, Bureau of Economic Statistics, USA

All told it has been a busy two years and I have been especially grateful to colleagues on the Executive Committee and others who have played an active part in supporting me, especially

Ada Van Krimpen for her personal support and the support of her office
 Nancy McBeth for her work on the web site
 Frank Nolan and now Fritz Scheuren for their editorship of the Journal
 Siu-Ming Tam as Programme Chair for IAOS 2012 Kiev
 Sharleen Forbes for her work on the IASE/IAOS satellite Macau 2013
 Hilkka Vihavainen as IAOS member of the Programme Committee for WSC Hong Kong
 Nancy Gordon for her work on the Young Statisticians Prize and the Membership campaign
 Shigeru Kawasaki for his general support and for getting IAOS 2014 Vietnam up and running, and

Jo Green from ONS for her work and tireless help
supporting the Executive Committee

Stephen Penneck
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President IAOS, 2011 to 2013
July 2013