



International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) Newsletter - September 2017

15 September 2017

Dear IAOS members and supporters

I am writing to you as the new IAOS President. This newsletter is the first of many that I intend, with the support of the new IAOS Executive, to send to members and supporters.

IAOS has the remit to promote the understanding and advancement of official statistics and related subjects, and to foster the development of effective and efficient statistical services. Official statistics are of utmost importance to inform societies about relevant social, economic and environmental phenomena.

It is in this context that I had the privilege of presenting the IAOS [2017-2019 Strategic Plan](#) to the IAOS General Assembly held during the World Statistical Congress. (There is more on the General Assembly later in this newsletter, along with selected highlights from some other aspects of the WSC.) The new strategic plan builds on the IAOS 2015-17 Strategic Plan, but has also been influenced by the new strategic vision for the ISI announced earlier this year, besides it responds to recent developments and contains a perspective towards the future. The Plan sets out what we aim to achieve over the next two years. I welcome your feedback on the plan.

Please send your comments, whether big or small to contactIAOS@gmail.com by 30 September 2017.

As Peter van de Ven (chair of the IAOS - OECD 2018 Local Organising Committee) and I explained at the General Assembly, preparations for the joint [IAOS - OECD 2018](#) conference are well underway. I encourage **all** IAOS members to get involved. You can:-

- propose topics,
- offer papers,
- promote the conference (email contactIAOS@gmail.com for fliers),
- support and mentor colleagues to prepare papers,
- encourage others to attend, and of course
- attend yourself.

With your contribution, this event will be highly successful - delivering "Better Statistics for Better Lives".

I would like to again thank the OECD for agreeing to be partners in this event. I would also like to thank the members of the conference scientific committee, led by Kees Zeelenberg of Statistics Netherlands, and the local organising committee headed by Peter van de Van of the OECD. I am sure that between the efforts of the scientific committee, the local organisers, the OECD and you, IAOS members, that this will be a great event.



I would also like to thank the previous IAOS President, Ola Awad, and my colleagues who served on the 2015-2017 Executive. Under Ola's leadership, the IAOS increased its profile, conducted the IAOS 2016 conference in Abu Dhabi and as noted below, worked hard to deliver on the 2015-17 Strategic Plan. Additional promotion material such as the IAOS videos and the new website are a credit to Ola and her staff from the PCBS.

My thanks also go to the Editor of the SJIAOS, Dr Kirsten West, who continues to guide the SJIAOS and ensure it publishes good quality scientific articles every quarter.

The new Executive started work during the WSC, with our first meeting. The new Executive comprises John Pullinger, President-Elect UK; Gemma Van Halderen, Australia, Mohammed Uzir Mahidin, Malaysia; Hasnae Fdhil, Morocco, Oliver Chingamya, Zambia, Teodora Brandmueller (SCORUS), Nancy McBeth (Special Adviser) New Zealand/Oman and Ada van Krimpen (ISI Head Office); along with Kees Zeelenberg (Chair, IAOS-OECD Scientific Programme Committee) and Rolando Ocampo (IAOS representative on the 2019 WSC Scientific Committee). My thanks to each one of them for agreeing to serve on the committee. I am glad to count on such a keen and enthusiastic group. I look forward to working with all of you.

I am confident that by working together, the IAOS executive, members and supporters can continue to remain relevant to users and producers of official statistics. Our main instruments are of course the biennial conference (the next one will be held in Paris in September 2018), the quarterly Statistical Journal of the IAOS (SJIAOS) and our two prizes. The IAOS Young Statisticians Prize (YSP) has been a successful competition for young (35 years and younger) official statisticians working in agencies producing official statistics. Next year, the IAOS with the support of the OECD will be awarding the new Young Scholars for Better Statistics award - an award for university students and their supervisors engaged in the field of official statistics.

Fundamentally the IAOS strives to constitute the forum at the forefront of the analysis, discussion and promotion of the most important and current issues in official statistics. I look forward to working with all IAOS members to continue this proud tradition as we meet the challenges of the future.

And so, it is appropriate that this newsletter highlights some of the key events from Marrakech, but also looks forward to the upcoming activities of the IAOS.

Thank you for your support and I look forward to our ongoing discussions.

Mario Palma, President 2017-2019

Key Dates for Members

Closing date for comments on the IAOS 2017-19 Strategic Plan - 30 September 2017

Closing date for 2018 YSP - 31 December 2017

Closing date for 2018 Young Scholars for Better Statistics award - 30 March 2018

IAOS-OECD 2018 Conference - closing date for contributed papers - 1 March 2018.



United Nations Statistical Commission, 6-9 March 2018. The IAOS EXCO will be held during the UNSC.

IAOS-OECD 2018 Conference, Paris, September 19-21, 2018

[62nd ISI 2019 World Statistics Congress](#), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 19-23 August 2019

Upcoming IAOS members Activities - How members can be involved

Promote the Young Scholars for Better Statistics - among local universities

Promote the 2018 Young Statistician Prize competition among local official statistics offices

Encourage colleagues to join the IAOS and enjoy the membership benefits, including access to all issues of the SJAOS

Submit papers for the SJAOS and encourage colleagues to do the same

Get involved with the IAOS- OECD 2018 Conference - participate, promote, support colleagues

IAOS17-19 Strategic Plan

The draft [2017-19 Strategic Plan](#) was presented to the 2017 General Assembly. The strategic objectives build on the previous plan, the SWOT analysis and the [new ISI Strategic Plan](#). The IAOS strategic objectives seek to promote the understanding and advancement of official statistics, and to foster the development of effective and efficient official statistical services, particularly in developing countries, through international contacts among individuals and organizations, including users of official statistics as well as research institutions. The eight strategic objectives are:

- 1 - Provide its membership and producers and users of statistical information in general, with a forum for the analysis and discussion of the most relevant issues of official statistics.
- 2 - Be a recognised vehicle for spreading knowledge in official statistics.
- 3 - Increase and diversify IAOS membership.
- 4 - Invest in creating mutual beneficial Partnerships.
- 5 - Strengthen communications with relevant actors related to official statistics.
- 6 - Contribute to the promotion and defence of the fundamental principles of official statistics.
- 7 - Institutionalize IAOS functions.
- 8 - Strengthen links with the ISI family

As with any strategic plan, each objective has a series of targets. Reporting on the targets will help members and supporters assess progress, as well as identify areas for improvement and engagement. There is a mix of new external focused activities, including the establishment of the new Young Scholars for Better Statistics (YSBS) Award together with the OECD, as well as strengthening the promotion and defence of the fundamental principles of official statistics and key internal focused business continuity activities such as improving services to members.

Consistent with the strategic objective to strengthen links with the ISI family, the strategic plan also shows how these IAOS objectives will contribute to the ISI strategic plan.

Your comments and views on this strategic plan are important. Please review the [plan](#) and send your comments to contactIAOS@gmail.com by 30 September, 2017.

2017 General Assembly

The main themes of the General Assembly, held on Monday 17 July 2017 during the WSC were

- Report from the outgoing President - Ola Awad - " Thinking Ahead Together"
- Report from the SJAOS Editor in Chief, Dr Kirsten West
- Introduction of the draft 2017 -19 IAOS Strategic Plan - Mario Palma, President 2017-19
- Presentation on the IAOS-OECD 2018 Conference - Peter van de Ven, Chair of the Local Organising Committee

Report from the 2015 - 2017 President, - Ola Awad, 'Thinking Ahead Together'

Successes of the 2015-17 Strategic Plan, highlighted by Ola, included

- Support for the 2017 YSP - 45 entries were received from 23 countries
- Attendance at the IAOS 2016 conference, with around 650 delegates. (There was strong support from the UAE and surrounding GCC countries for the conference. Ola also thanked the Statistics Centre of Abu Dhabi (SCAD), the hosts for all their efforts to making the conference a success.)
- Establishment of new partnerships with the Inter American Statistical Institute (IASI) and the OECD. The IAOS also has a long standing and valued partnership with the International Association for Statistical Education (IASE).
- In terms of the financial situation, the overall equity situation remained good. Revenue was increasing steadily. Expenditure was also increasing, as resources were used to support activities such as the SJAOS and the YSP.

Finally, Ola encouraged IAOS members to help achieve her wish list - a membership of over 1,000 members.



Outgoing IAOS President Ola Awad, highlighting membership numbers during the 2017 IAOS General Assembly.



SJIAOS report from Editor in Chief - Dr Kirsten West

Highlights from the SJIAOS report included:

- Progress in the quality and quantity of the SJIAOS. (The SJIAOS was 677 pages in 2015, and 763 pages in 2016. The first two issues of 2017 are already at 564. Contributors come from a wide range of countries, with over 30 countries in 2016.)
- Journal topics continue to be wide ranging, including Big Data, Data Quality, Dissemination, Data Collection, Management of Statistical System.
- With help from Guest Editors, there have been a number of special issues including Local Data, Big Data, Measuring Wealth, Integrating Statistical and Geospatial information, Census taking and Data Fabrication.
- Quarterly interviews with official statisticians are now an established feature and have been joined by a new feature "Conversations" - a discussion forum on relevant topics.
- The agreement between IAOS and IASI to publish each other's manuscripts has already seen articles published in both the SJIAOS and Estadística (the IASI journal).

Going forward, the SJIAOS Editorial team aims to:

- Remain relevant to users and producers of official statistics
- Become recognized internationally in the field of official statistics
- Receive a ranking among scientific journals.

Many thanks to Kirsten, the other members of the Editorial Team, and all the Associate Editors and Technical Reviewers. (There is more on the latest issue of the SJIAOS later in the newsletter.)

Draft 2017 -19 IAOS Strategic Plan - Mario Palma, President 2017-19

Before introducing the Strategic Plan, incoming President Mario thanked the 2015-17 IAOS Executive (Ola Awad, President, Palestine; Sibyle von Oppeln Bronikowski, Germany, Leslie Tang, Hong Kong, Oliver Chinganya, Zambia, Nancy McBeth New Zealand/Oman, Teodora Brandmueller (SCORUS), Ada van Krimpen (ISI Head Office), Kirsten West (SJIAOS Editor), Eric Rancourt - IAOS2016 Program Committee Chair and Rolando Ocampo (IAOS representative on the 2017 WSC Scientific Committee)

Mario also briefly introduced the full members of the incoming Executive (John Pullinger, President-Elect UK; Gemma Van Halderen, Australia, Mohammed Uzir Mahidin, Malaysia; Hasnae Fdhil, Morocco, Oliver Chinganya, Zambia, Teodora Brandmueller (SCORUS), Nancy McBeth Adviser, New Zealand/Oman, Ada van Krimpen (ISI Head Office), Kirsten West (SJIAOS Editor), Kees Zeelenberg (Chair, IAOS-OECD Scientific Programme Committee) and Rolando Ocampo (IAOS representative on the 2019 WSC Scientific Committee).

In introducing the draft Strategic plan, Mario noted the context for the strategic plan, including:

- some of the major challenges for official statistics across the world, including Resources (eg finances and talent); remaining Relevant and Technology.
- pressures directly pertaining to IAOS as an organization such as Resourcing (financing and people), the need to continue to build up and maintain membership, challenges of finding host

countries for the biennial conference, as well as the need to balance the needs of developing and developed countries (where many members come from),

Mario explained the themes of the strategic plan (as noted in the opening comments above) and emphasised the need for all members to get involved in the [2017 -2019 Strategic Plan](#), and its associated implementation plan.

Mario also explained one of the new initiatives - the Young Scholars for Better Statistics award - an award for university students and their supervisors engaged in the field of official statistics. The aim of this award is to reward research conducted by university students in official statistical themes. One of the differences in this award, is that the winning student and their supervisor will be invited to attend the IAOS-OECD 2018 conference in Paris. There is more about the competition on the IAOS-OECD conference website. - <http://www.oecd.org/iaos2018/>.



Incoming IAOS President, Mario Palma, introducing the 2017-19 IAOS Strategic Plan

IAOS-OECD 2018 Conference - Peter van de Ven, Chair of the Local Organising Committee

Peter introduced the theme of the conference - **Better Statistics for Better Lives** . Under this umbrella, the conference will have the following sub-themes

- Issues related to Sustainability
- Well -being and quality of life
- Measurement and impact of digitalisation and globalisation
- Future role and position of official statistics
- Other topics

Peter also explained that each of these sub-themes has a series of topics. These are all on the conference website - at <http://www.oecd.org/iaos2018/themes/>



WSC Scientific Programme - some selected high points

Once again the IAOS made a strong contribution to the scientific programme at the WSC. Our thanks to the session organisers, speakers, discussants and chairs for thought provoking discussions. An extra special thanks to Rolando Ocampo, INEGI, who once again was the IAOS representative on the WSC Scientific committee.

The WSC had many highlights. A couple of IAOS specific highlights included the IAOS President's session organised by Ola Awad. This session included presentations on the IAOS Past (former IAOS President Steve Penneck), IAOS Present (Ola Awad) and the IAOS Future (Mario Palma). Steve explained the history of the IAOS and some of the challenges along the way. His presentation reminded the audience that an association like the IAOS will need to regularly review whether it is relevant, and how it should respond to the changing environment. Ola picked up the theme of the changing environment and explained how the IAOS has responded over the last two years. Finally Mario set out some of the challenges for the future, including the future strategic direction as set out in the 2017-19 Strategic plan.

This session was also a chance to see together many former Presidents of the IAOS, including Jean Louis Bodin, one of the founding fathers of the IAOS in 1986. Former Presidents Irena Krizman and Hallgrímur Snorrason also attended, making a total of 6 IAOS presidents present at the same time.

Another special event was the **SJIAOS session** - around the theme of Data Fabrication. This session featured papers which had appeared in the journal on this theme. The audience was reminded that Data Fabrication was not an interviewer issue but a management issue. While two speakers provided case studies on experiences of data fabrication (and some associated challenges); the final speaker outlined the work of the Joint Taskforce of the ASA and the AAPOR into Data Fabrication, which aims to agree on principles and protocols. The session was a reminder that all official statisticians and our colleagues in the wider survey and research sector all have responsibilities to minimise, manage and report issues of data fabrication.

If you attended another WSC session that you think should be considered for publication in the SJIAOS, contact the SJIAOS editor at kwestiaos@gmail.com.

IAOS support for Andreas Georgiou, Former ELStat President, Greece

IAOS members will be aware of the case of Andreas Georgiou, the former President of ELStat (the Greek Statistical Authority). We would like to draw members attention to the recent decision of the Greek Appeals Court to convict Andreas Georgiou, of violation of duty by not obtaining approval from the Board of ELSTAT to release the 2009 Greek Debt and deficit figures.

As ISI President Helen MacGillivray and ISI Ethics Committee President Steve Penneck said in [a public statement in early August](#), "Mr Georgiou acted at all times in complete compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice, which he was required to do under the provisions of the Greek Statistical Law applying at the time". The IAOS joins the ISI in calling on the Greek Government and the EU Commission, in consultation with their respective statistical authorities, to take all necessary measures to challenge this verdict and seek its reversal as a matter of the utmost priority.

The latest ISI statement can be found [here](#).

IAOS - OECD 2018 Conference

As noted above, planning is well underway for the IAOS- OECD 2018 Conference. The conference will be held at the OECD Conference Centre, in Paris from 19-21 September, 2018. The conference website is already providing useful information. See <http://www.oecd.org/iaos2018/>

The call for Special Topic Sessions (STS) will open on 1 March 2018.

There are many ways that all IAOS members should get involved:-

- proposing Special Topic Sessions,
- presenting papers or leading discussions,
- promoting the conference (email contactIAOS@gmail.com for fliers) ,
- supporting and mentoring colleagues to prepare papers and of course
- encouraging others to attend - as well as attending yourself.

With your contribution, this event will be highly successful for both the IAOS and the OECD - delivering "Better Statistics for Better Lives".



Members of the IAOS - OECD 2018 Conference Scientific Committee during the 2017 WSC

IAOS Executive Meeting

The first meeting of the new Executive took place during the WSC. This meeting was a chance to acknowledge the work of the previous executive under the leadership of outgoing President Ola Awad, and welcome the incoming Executive. Mario briefed the new Executive on the Strategic Plan, and reviewed priorities for the new Executive.



2015-17 and 2017-19 IAOS Executive members meeting during the 2017 WSC.



IAOS 2017-19 Executive members (and their representatives) at the WSC (L- R)

Peter van de Ven, Chair of the IAOS - OECD 2018 Local Organising Committee (representing Kees Zeelenberg (SPC Chair)); Nancy McBeth (Advisor); Mario Palma (President); Dr Kirsten West (Editor SJIAOS); Mohd Uzir Mahd (EXCO); Oliver Chinganya (EXCO); Jagdev Virdee (representing SCORUS); Emma Rourke (representing John Pullinger (President Elect)); Rolando Ocampo (2017 WSC Representative)

Missing Gemma Van Halderen (EXCO); Hasnae Fdhil (EXCO)

YSP 2017 winners

One of the many special events at the WSC was the presentation by the YSP 2017 winner, Hannah Thomas, United Kingdom. Hannah's winning paper was titled "*The Dissemination Game: How to communicate official statistics to non-expert users.*"



The winners of the YSP 2017 were publicly acknowledged during the ISI Awards ceremony held during the WSC.

Once again the IAOS congratulates the winners of the 2017 competition

First Prize Winner - Hannah Thomas, United Kingdom

Second Prize Winner - Nicholas Husek, Australia

Third Prize Winner - Andreas Mayer, Australia

These winning papers will be published in a future issue of the SJIAOS.

YSP 2018 competition - closes 31 December 2017

The 2018 IAOS Young Statisticians Prize has been launched. This annual international prize, is awarded for the best paper in the field of official statistics written by a **young official statistician**.

The first place winner will receive monetary prizes and travel funds to present the paper at the 16th IAOS Conference being jointly organized with the OECD in Paris from 19-21 September 2018. **IAOS members are encouraged to remind all eligible official statisticians to enter. IAOS members are also encouraged to mentor and support colleagues entering the competition.**

More information about the competition is available [here](#)

Young Statisticians for Better Statistics Award - closes 20 March 2018

The IAOS and the OECD invite students to participate in the “*Young Scholars for Better Statistics*” award for the best paper by a **student** using official statistics. This new award seeks to recognise academic work from students and their academic advisors and encourage young statisticians to take an active interest in official statistics. The winning papers must contribute to better understanding official statistics, as well as their usefulness and challenges, proposing potential options to improve their production in a particular subject or field of analysis.

In addition to monetary prizes, the first-place winner and their academic advisor will receive travel funds to present their paper at the 2018 IAOS-OECD Conference in Paris, France on 19-21 September 2018. More information is available [here](#)

While the IAOS team will be conducting a promotion campaign among universities, all IAOS members are asked to promote this competition among their local universities. Contact the IAOS President, Mario Palma at contactIAOS@gmail.com for more information.

SJIAOS

June 2017 Issue

The theme of the June issue was the count of young children. The experience of the US shows that while the decennial census does a good job of counting the overall population, there are issues in enumerating young children. With many policy decisions and federally funded programs for children, it is important to get this count right. While there is a strong focus on the US situation, there is also input from statisticians in Canada and France. The difficulties encountered in the enumeration process in developed countries may have lessons for counting children everywhere and in all types of family structures.



This issue of the journal also features a special interview - a conversation with editor-in-chief emeritus, Dr. Fritz Scheuren. His many and unique contributions to official statistics and to this Journal are well captured.

September 2017 issue

The September issue has the theme of 'Urban, Regional and Small Area Statistics.' Associate editor, Asta Manninen is the guest editor. She compiled the issue in collaboration with Teodora Brandmuller and Klaus Trutzel on behalf of SCORUS. Asta Manninen is also interviewed in this issue. The issue also includes papers on a range of topics of general interest to producers and users of official statistics. These include the challenges of using administrative data in the production of official statistics, imputation for missing values and methods for producing synthetic data.

SCORUS

SCORUS (Standing Committee on Regional and Urban Statistics) is the international network for regional and urban statistics providing a platform to facilitate the development of urban and regional statistics and research. Papers from the recent SCORUS conference feature in the September SJIAOS. For more about SCORUS and how you can get involved, see [here](#).

Closing comments

We welcome short items of interest to members of the IAOS, official statisticians, providers and users of official statistics for publication in this newsletter and/or on the IAOS website. Please send your contributions to contactIAOS@gmail.com or nancyemcbeth@gmail.com.

Finally I really welcome any feedback and suggestions that you may have on matters relating to Official Statistics and the work of the IAOS in particular. Please feel free to contact me about any issues related to the IAOS, or official statistics in general.

Thank you again for your support

Mario Palma
IAOS President, 2017-19

Contact names and email addresses:

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