

## EDUCATION GROUP - FUTURE PLANS

Following the modest success\* of Reading Between the Numbers, the Education Group is thinking about a new project. One area we would like to explore is the relationship between resources and educational attainment. RBTN implies, in its criticism of 15000 Hours, that resources really do influence attainment, but Government ministers argue that no such link exists and therefore cuts are justified. Also, the conventional wisdom (apparently supported by research) is that pupils do not learn more in smaller classes - so there is no justification for reducing the pupil-teacher ratio and spending more on teachers. We would like to look critically at this proposition and produce data/models to refute it.

One kind of model we have in mind is educational attainment, measured by public examination results at LEA level, determined by LEA spending on secondary schools with allowance made for socio-economic differences between LEAs by using 1981 Census data. This is a 'between LEA' analysis, but it would, we believe, need to be supplemented by a 'between school within LEA' analysis. The data for the former <sup>(mini project)</sup> are available, but the data for the latter <sup>(maxi project)</sup> present problems.

The 'maxi' project we have in mind is ambitious and would be time-consuming. It is probably beyond the means of the four major authors of RBTN. Anyone interested in contributing to the project is invited to contact us at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, through Ian Plewis: T.C.R.U., 41 Brunswick Sq, London WC1N 1AZ  
'phone 01 278 2424, ext. 264.

We would also like to hear from anyone with other ideas that they would like to explore with the Group.

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*STOP PRESS: At our meeting on 29 April, the Education Group decided not to go ahead with the maxi project, but to keep the mini project 'ticking over'.*

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\* 1300 copies bought in the first 6 months - Ed.

## HEALTH GROUP

### Third World Health Statistics

Despite considerable interest and support for the project we have continued to find it difficult to focus attention on a practical target that we can tackle. This has led to a waning of enthusiasm at recent meetings. We have dug out some general information about the kind of data that is available, and its shortcomings, but any realistic approach would involve a detailed knowledge of a handful of countries, and a commitment to attack a particular problem. Those of us who have been able to meet regularly do not have the detailed experience to push us in the right direction.

For this reason we decided at the last meeting to shelve this project until someone comes up with a more specific suggestion that will regenerate enthusiasm. We'd like to thank all those who took an interest in the project, and those who helped us with support and information. It was all much appreciated, and we hope to provide a summary of our general findings in a future newsletter.

### Forthcoming

For the next few meetings we have decided to adopt a more relaxed attitude and simply have discussions, with no pressure to produce anything at the end of it. The first of these meetings will be on June 28th at the London School of Hygiene at 6.15pm when we shall be talking about Doll and Peto's 'The Causes of Cancer'. The following meeting (date to be arranged) will look at 'Health Care and its Costs', the DHSS's version of the development of the NHS over the last few years.

All are welcome at these or any other meetings. For any further information contact Alison Macfarlane (St. Albans 52111) or Steve Bennett (01-560 1945).

## Radical Statistics Nuclear Disarmament Group

Only 4 people, Ian Miles, Jo Lowndes, Phil Clarke and Alison Macfarlane managed to get to the meeting on April 12. Jo Lowndes apologised for the delay in sending out the notices, owing to lack of post boxes on Greenham Common.

1. Jeff Evans and Alison Macfarlane had been to a meeting at CND about resources for peace education. The meeting had started on the premise that there was a dearth of these, but subsequent discussion revealed that there were quite a lot around. It was decided to get as many as possible together and display them at an 'information exchange' (low key exhibition) which it was hoped to arrange on July 1/2. At the same time it was planned to evaluate the materials and publish lists of those which could be recommended. There are to be two further meetings on April 27 and May 25, which it was hoped in Jeff's absence that he could attend on our behalf.
2. CND's use of statistics was discussed and found wanting in a number of ways. It was decided that we should have a slightly better chance of exerting a beneficial influence if we affiliated directly - we are already affiliated through BSSRS. Ian agreed to organise this and to set up a telephone tree to deal with any requests for help his efforts might generate.
3. Jo Lowndes reported that Pluto Press would be interested in publishing both a computer game and a board game. Ian had some people interested in doing programming for a computer game. As, however, the people who had expressed interest in games were not at the meeting, the discussion could not be explored any further. It was decided to circulate the 'Arms Race: just a mistake?' article from the New Scientist to inspire people. (17 Feb. 1983, pp. 432-435).
4. It was decided not to hold the meeting which had been provisionally arranged for April 22 when we met in January, but to wait for response about proposed games.

DO YOU KNOW A MEDIAPERSON ?

A steering group meeting has decided that Radstats needs a list of media contacts. If you know any left(ish) or sympathetic journalists, please send their phone numbers and addresses to Radstats, c/o BSSRS. If you know them on a personal basis, and would be willing to contact them on Radstats business, please so indicate.

Anti-Social Trends Group  
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This group was formed at the 1982 conference and held one meeting in April 1982. At this meeting, various forms of a social statistics publication were discussed. Details of the outcome of the meeting held a year ago are reported in RSN 24. Basically, the idea most favoured was a popular version of a social indicators collection evaluating British ways of life. Data would be included on various topics such as education, health, housing, work and employment, with common themes such as inequalities in welfare, alternative statistics, running through the statistics presented. Please see RSN 24 for a fuller description of the intended publication, or write Jenny Head at the address below.

Since this meeting last year, nothing much has happened but as several people have expressed an interest in this area, it was decided at the recent AGM to resurrect the group. A meeting will be held at the UCL Department of Community Medicine on Friday, June 24th at 6.00pm. Address: 88 Chenies Mews, off Torrington Pl., London W.C.1.

Please can you let me know if you intend to come to the meeting. If you are interested in helping with this publication, but can't come please get in touch and let me know what help you would be willing to give.

Jenny Head, 19, Headingley Mount, Leeds LS6 3EL. Tel: Leeds 740407(h)  
Leeds 431751x7116 (w)

## Women in Statistics

After the Friday evening meeting of the RSG conference, several people expressed an interest in forming a group to discuss the issue of women in statistics and possibly write a pamphlet on the issue. If you are interested in joining such a group, or can provide information, please get in touch. You will be notified of any meetings.

Women In Statistics, RSG, c/o BSSRS, 9 Poland St, London W1V 3DG.

**NOW...**

it's up to

**YOU**