

News

Most of the news concerns the business of the 2005 Radical Statistics AGM but in addition there is a communication from the Troika and details of the 2006 RadStats essay competition.

Communication from the Troika – Keeping in touch

Having a scattered membership, our communication channels are very important. Originally subgroups were quite active; members met face to face in sub-group meetings. The newsletters were produced - literally using 'cut & paste' as I remember, but these contained news of sub-group activity and reports of troika business meetings.

We recommend that you browse through these on the website www.radstats.org.uk. While the presentation of recent newsletters has been of a very high standard, the lively interchange evident from earlier newsletters has now been diverted to the public list RADSTATS@JISCMAIL.AC.UK.

How do we keep the lively spirit of old? Are members feeling the strain of the pressures of work to the detriment of debate and unified challenge of perceived wrong-doing?

Here are a few ideas, but we would welcome more from you.

There is a lively debate on the RADSTATS@jiscmail.ac.uk, and we would like volunteers to come forward to collate and summarise these interchanges on various issues for publication in the newsletter.

Our website is a big asset. It is an excellent shop-window for Radical Statistics. Recent additions include a paper produced by Policy Press on inequalities in the UK, and Ludi Simpson's audio file 'Where Have All the Young Men Gone?' (Census programme). We want more of these. Should we have a contact list and profiles of members on the site?

The troika intends to make our new recruitment leaflet gather more information about members, to build up a network of those with like interests. This could result in more subgroups that could hold meetings or make contact through email. The existing subgroups are listed inside the front cover of the newsletter but may need more support. There is a good case, following recently announced government initiatives, for renewed activity within the Education

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subgroup. There are other challenges to government policy in health care that should keep the Health subgroup busy. Please let us have your suggestions.

Janet Shapiro for the Troika (Shailen Nandy, Mike Quiggin, Janet Shapiro & Geoffrey Rendle)

Forthcoming RadStats Critical Essay Competition

**Third Radical Statistics
Critical Essay 2006**

Speak your mind and win a prize!

Submit an original essay (3,000 words maximum), by **1st May 2006**, that addresses a current social research/policy question, with critical use and interpretation of relevant data sources.

First prize £300,
Second prize £200

in two categories of entry: Student or Open,
awarded on the basis of readability, clear presentation of statistical material, critical perspective and convincing argument.

Age and experience will taken into account by the judges:

Simon Briscoe	Statistics Editor of the Financial Times,
Len Cook	National Statistician, (2000-2005)
Professor Ruth Levitas	University of Bristol,
Professor Denise Lievesley	Health and Social Care Information Centre
Dr. Susan Starkings	London South Bank University.

The essay awarded first prize will be featured on the Radical Statistics website and published in a special issue of 'Radical Statistics', the newsletter of Radical statistics. Judges decision will be by 1st July 2006*.

Applications are encouraged well before deadline. Enter, by sending your essay by e mail, labelled : Radstats Critical Essay, including full name, address, age and number of years for which you have been engaged in social research, statistics, or the social sciences to janet.rmshapiro@btopenworld.com

** More detailed information can be found on the website
www.radstats.org.uk*

Call for applications for the post of Administrator to the Radical Statistics Group

The work of the Radical Statistics Group (RSG) would be impossible without administrative help. Pete Lata arche was our administrator until January 2004, when David Symes took over. Since then, David has served the group with enthusiasm, but unfortunately because of ill-health and the pressure of other commitments, he is having to stand down.

The Troika is grateful to David that he has agreed to help us until March 2006. We hope to have a new administrator appointed by January 2006, to give a period of overlap that will help the new person learn the organisational details. Therefore applications are needed by the end of December 2005.

The applicant should share the aims of the group, which is more important than having a technical knowledge of statistics. This is a self-employed position, where day-to-day direction comes from the Troika (currently four), who resolve any problems that arise. You must be confident about keeping clear records, on computer and on paper as appropriate, and about being generally reliable and efficient. Note that the RSG does not have an office, so you need to provide your own physical workspace and liaise with Troika members largely by email or telephone.

There are three main aspects of the work:

- maintaining the membership database (set up on Access), monitoring the payment of subscriptions, and following up associated problems,
- as administrative contact, dealing with enquiries and organising the bookings to attend the annual conference,
- journal printing and distribution; the group publishes three newsletters per year. (This normally requires liaison with a local printer)

A detailed breakdown of these tasks is available. David estimates that the overall average monthly work load is between 5 and 6 hours, but it is normally 4 hours, and at most 24 hours at busy periods. At those times you need to be comfortable about working to deadlines.

For payment, the administrator submits regular claims for payment based upon day-to-day expenses and hours worked to the treasurer (£10 per hour).

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The Troika troika@radstats.org.uk would be pleased to discuss the work with anyone interested, and David Symes is also glad to be approached at admin@radstats.org.uk.

Applications to the Troika troika@radstats.org.uk .

Radical Statistics Group Conference March 3rd-5th 2006

To be held at Hathersage Youth Hostel, which is close the Hathersage Station near Sheffield, served by trains between Sheffield and Manchester Piccadilly.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

'Are numbers working for you?: using statistics in campaigns'.

Next year's conference will focus on a review of the work of the RadStats Group and RadStats members over the years and an examination of the effectiveness of using statistics in radical campaigns. We hope this will be an encouraging exercise that would also attract new members.

We have expertise within the group and there are members who could give presentations that cover:

1. How to get data, how to cope with gaps and inconsistencies in the data and how to cope with the vast increase in sources of data nowadays.
2. Interpreting the data, how to disentangle presentation of statistics that may have been distorted by government or by companies. Clarifying how and why statistics quoted from different interest groups conflict.
3. Presenting and communicating the statistics to clarify underlying trends.
4. case studies, reports of campaigns, especially small scale or local.

The programme will include some brief presentations and posters, and the organisers will leave time for discussion. We should also like to include reports from other organisations on campaigns that used statistics.

WE WOULD LIKE TO ORGANISE SPEAKERS FOR NEXT YEAR'S CONFERENCE AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE

If you think that you can make a contribution – or if you can suggest a group or individual it would be useful for us to approach then please contact the troika. troika@radstats.org.uk