

December 21, 2021

Dear IASS Members,

We hope you are doing well, especially in this unsettling and stressful time of the coronavirus. On 2023, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of IASS. My most sincere congratulations to all current and past members and my sincere gratitude to all the Presidents and EC members which brought and will bring IASS up to this important date.

This first formal letter is the occasion to introduce you in the new Executive Committee members and their roles:

- a) Vice President for finance: Jairo Arrow
- b) Scientific secretary: M. Giovanna Ranalli (with the support of Nikos Tzavidis)
- c) Vice President for liaising with ISI EC and ISI PO plus administrative matters: Natalie Shlomo
- d) Chair of the 2023 Cochran-Hansen prize committee: Nikos Tzavidis
- e) IASS representative on the 2023 WSC scientific programme committee: Natalie Shlomo
- f) IASS representative on the 2023 WSC short course committee: Natalie Shlomo
- g) IASS representative on the ISI publications committee; M. Giovanna Ranalli
- h) IASS Webinars Representatives 2021-2023; Andrea Silva (supported by the EC members as the EC has the collective responsibility of the programme)

IASS today is a prominent and well-respected scientific organization that brings together many hundreds of scholars from a variety of Institutions, spread all over the world.

The wisdom of our leaders in 1973, when the idea of IASS was born, and in the following decades, when our association was established, paved the way for a rapid and continuing growth of survey methods in the world.

By the seventies, we have taken a prominent role in shifting the focus of research and policy to understanding and addressing the challenges faced by new data collection tools and methods. During the last decades, survey methods have been progressively evolving, following the development of new tools of data collection: smart devices as meters, mobile phones, GPS systems and several new applications. Methods have been continuously advancing to measuring uncertainty and data quality, integrating Big and small data sources and developing methods to make inferences from the data. At the same time new methods for analyzing large volumes of data, as machine learning and AI methods, are emerging. The focus of IASS has become and will remain engaging with scientific communities involved in data collection and socio-economic data analysis and embracing knowledge systems complementary to survey methods, as applied mathematics, computer science and IT. The voice of survey methods is now heard at global and regional conferences, from the Northern Baltic Ukrainian network of survey methodologies in Europe, where IASS is a supporter, to the Workshops organized in Africa and Pakistan, where IASS is one of only few region-based member associations.

Although our successes are many, it is not the time to rest.

Country IASS representatives need to be confirmed or renewed. Our communication plan using social media needs to be developed. The number of individual members and institution members needs to increase. Young generations of professionals and researchers from developed and developing countries need our support.

In the mandate, the EC's and my priorities will be to (1) engage our members to become even more involved with IASS both on the Country and Global levels (2) help our members to grow professionally, through the tools provided by IASS (Conferences, Workshops, Prizes and Publications) and disseminated through IASS's network, and (3) continue to increase this network with solutions and opportunities through IASS communication plan and social networks. We hope that these resources will help you to disseminate and develop survey methodology in your job as well as in your community and also to increase the number of IASS members.

I shall devote my following formal letters to tell you of what we have achieved and what we have not.

The new challenges are emerging: we are grappling with an increasing "datafication" of all the aspects of our life: this makes Citizen Science and Citizen Generated Data interesting opportunities to design probability and non-probability surveys, with new "smart" data collection methods, opening new issues in designing training sets of data in AI and machine learning, data integration and data analysis. In addition, we face the COVID-19 pandemic.

As individuals and as an organization, we are affected by these. COVID-19 postponed some of our supported Conferences and Workshops, which will take place on the next months. COVID-19 transformed the life in our communities and forever altered the ways we conduct research. At the same time, it has given us an opportunity to reflect on what, how and why we pursue science in the survey methods research field.

Many important topics and emerging issues among those mentioned before were and will be treated and discussed in the new-born IASS Webinars series. I invite you all to join the IASS webinars series and act as a promoter of this initiative in your own network of researchers. This new tool and the Covid 'pause' could provide an opportunity for our community to consider what kind of research in survey methods we would like, to make our partnership more fruitful to serve with accurate evidence and reliable data the scientific community and our stakeholders.

Finally, as we are celebrating the 49th anniversary of IASS at the computer screens or in socially-distanced settings, we all thank the many colleagues and friends of the ISI PO and of the IASS who invested their passion in making it possible. Thanks also to our current members for support, and rejoice in hoping that the path we are on is the road to working together across disciplines, knowledge systems, borders and generations.

Wishing you a peaceful and serene 2022 with IASS,

Yours
Monica Pratesi
IASS President