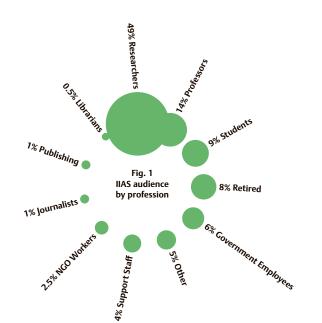
The Newsletter | No.59 | Spring 2012 22 | The Survey

# Our strengths, our challenges

What is your opinion of IIAS and its activities? What are our strengths? Where could we make improvements? The IIAS survey findings are available in their entirety online at www.iias.nl/survey2011, but here we analyse and respond to some of the key points raised.

**Thomas Voorter (Communications Coordinator IIAS)** 

EARLIER THIS YEAR, we sent out a personalised email invitation to 4,925 randomly selected individuals from our database and asked them to fill in a short questionnaire. Within a month we had received 1,464 high quality responses. A response rate of nearly 30%. We would like to thank everybody who took the time to complete the survey.

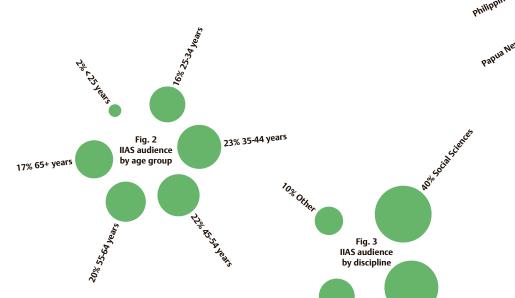


### **OUR AUDIENCE AND THE WAY THEY SEE US**

As you can see in fig. 1, the majority of our audience work in academic circles (researcher, (retired) professor, student) and in the public, nonprofit sector (NGOs, government departments). Age groups appear to be evenly distributed (fig. 2), and the division between fields of discipline well-balanced (fig. 3). This is less so for the distribution of men (62.6%) and women (37.4%).

Our audience truly lives all over the world, as shown proportionately in figure 4. Within this circle of global representation we inserted some illustrative comments collected through the survey, and a number of keywords that our audience associates with us. We received suggestions about ways to better divide our attention between different Asian regions and across age groups, ideas about new research ventures and cooperation in Africa and Latin America, requests for strengthening ties with other academic institutes, and many compliments for and comments on The Newsletter, our quarterly publication.

We posed an open question in the survey, asking for images that come to mind when people think of the IIAS. From the approximately 1,200 answers we learned that our audience considers the IIAS to be an openminded, comprehensive, academic research institute and a supportive network agency. The few negative attributes shared with us deal mostly with being out of reach; keywords used included cliquish, distant, and bureaucratic.



**OPEN-MINDED** 

Post-doc research at IIAS was for me a very rich experience as well as a friendly and open-minded environment for doing research. About research staff and visiting scholars, I would like to underline that sharing ideas with Asian scholars about Asian Studies was very fulfilling and refreshing. Evelyne Micollier,

IIAS' inclusion of Asian scholars as an integral part of its activities and research. The IIAS newsletter is very informative, well edited, and nicely produced.

UNITED STATES

**BROAD** 

Hike

While I don't mean to be US-centric, I would like to see more ways in which the IIAS could better incorporate scholars in the US, particularly with regard to their research grants. UNITED STATES

**INTERDISCIPLINARY** 

**EUROPEAN** 

We need to get to know your institution here in Latin America. You have some very good and interesting tools that could improve our discussions on Asian Studies.

> challenge should be to make Asian Studies better known outside the US-EU-Asia network. Latin America has connections and shares historical links with Asia, the representation of it within the field of Asian Studies is rather limited. Claudio Pinheiro, BRAZIL

IIAS should evolve better communicative networks to widely publicise its' various research and fellowship programmes. INDIA

> IIAS needs to work on qualitycontrol for the ICAS conferences. SINGAPORE

IIAS is an innovative organization, but I'm still not sure how much you have permeated the consciousness of Helen Wallimann. Asian scholars in North America. SWITZERLAND I would like to see more, and receive more information on

studies. Without it, I could not keep up with developments INDIA

> Make your services to journalists more up to date. and be more active in this field. NETHERLANDS

NETWORK

your scholarly networks.

**UNITED STATES** 

IIAS Newsletter is

one of the most impor-

tant publications in Asia

in Asian studies. I am glad

that is it still in paper.

UNITED STATES

is a wonderful institution which has served Asian Studies scholars very well over the years. The Newsletter is excellent and the ICAS conferences are something we really look forward to. I Hope you can keep IIAS operating at the same level in future despite financial crises all around. AUSTRALIA

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the 70% who indicated

is well-known in Europe rather than in Asia. To make IIAS a global role, it needs more contacts with academic institutions and universities in Asia. VIET NAM

INVITATION

#### **COMPREHENSIVE**

be more regular on the facebook site and email newsletter etc. A weekly I am not a specialist or email would be a good way to researcher but I always find promote talks, conferences the Newsletter very interesting and job opportunities. and find myself reading almost all the articles. I learn a lot of things about countries like Korea or Indonesia that I had no idea about before. **ENGAGING** 

**DIVERSE** 

IIAS

seems like a really

**SINGAPORE** 

# ACTIVE

In the light of an increasing number of participants, proper screening of works has to be undertaken with a little more honesty and sincerity. An undeserving student or young researcher's paper shouldn't go through just because he or she is young.

**ICAS** conferences are well organized. The acceptance rate of papers is excellent PHILIPPINES

OPEN

politics of Asia and its diasporic The Newsletter always makes me feel as if I am working in a mainstream area instead of at the periphery. Please keep sending a paper issue! UNITED KINGDOM

NEW MEDIA, OLD MEDIA?

We asked our audience how they stay up-to-date on developments in their fields of expertise (fig. 5), and through which media they know IIAS, by activity (fig. 6). Although the use of social media is not yet widespread amongst Asianists, we envision more use of these platforms in the near future, which is why we also publish all our institutional news through the most popular social media platforms. We have created separate Facebook pages and groups for different IIAS programmes and initiatives, such as News Asia Books, ICAS, our Summer Programmes and research networks.

Interesting fact: most of our Facebook friends live in Indonesia. Please also join us on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Not only to read what we have to say, but also to talk to us and our network.



interesting institution but a little hard to penetrate. For instance, the website has lots of interesting info, but updates could

Estonia

IIAS should become more open and try to reach out to young scientists (getting rid off the 'old boys network' image).

**NETHERLANDS** 

Glad to hear that IIAS is moving into social networking; Twitter has become a valuable tool in institutional updates and news from a variety of programs lately. **UNITED STATES** 

What

I would like is for IIAS to

extend its focus to Africa where

most of the Asian activities were

witnessed in the colonial times and

whose legacy persists. The conferences and

fellowships should also be extended to

include Africa. I am very willing to participate

actively and assist in this new frontier. Your

coverage, fellowship and conferences

should also include international

communities. Willis Otieno

Maganda, KENYA

UP-TO-DATE

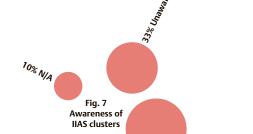
INTERESTING

sure that you might reach out to more researchers by offering grants to young individual researchers and not only for grand projects with famous academics.

NORWAY

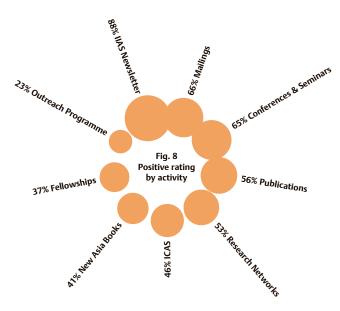
IIAS' perceived relevance to

I am



**OUR CLUSTERS, OUR STRATEGY** 

Last year we started channeling all our research activities through three thematic clusters: Asian Cities, Global Asia, and Asian Heritages. While it is still a relatively new development, we were encouraged to see that many of our audience members are aware of our research clusters (fig. 7). Our future communication efforts will nevertheless be geared towards the further branding of these clusters. Find out more at www.iias.nl/research.



## **RELEVANCE AND RATING**

Our perceived relevance to Asian studies is perhaps the most important of gauges (fig. 9). It is our aim and continuous ambition to be relevant for individual scholars and research communities worldwide, not only in Europe. We also asked respondents to rate our academic services. The percentage of our audience that rates us, per activity, as good or excellent gives us a clear indication of where we need to improve (fig. 8).

Overall, IIAS is best known for its quarterly publication, The Newsletter, and for the large number of conferences and seminars it organises. The survey has made it clear that we, however, need to advertise our fellowship programme, research networks, publication series and outreach activities more actively, and to a much wider audience.