

EDUCATION AND TRAINING: A HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

EDUCATION AND TRAINING HAS BEEN A STATUTORY ACTIVITY OF THE AGENCY SINCE ITS INCEPTION. THE RESEARCH TRAINING FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME WAS THE FIRST ACTIVITY TO BE SET UP WHEN THE AGENCY WAS CREATED IN 1965, BEFORE ANY OF THE SCIENTIFIC AREAS WERE ESTABLISHED. AT THAT TIME, AND FOR A SIGNIFICANT PERIOD AFTER, IARC FELLOWSHIPS WERE ONE OF ONLY A FEW INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS IN CANCER RESEARCH, ENABLING RESEARCHERS TO TRAIN IN A MAJOR INSTITUTE IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY. THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME WAS THEREFORE A VITAL MEANS OF PROMOTING IARC AS A NEW INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AND OF ENHANCING ITS IMAGE AND VISIBILITY WORLDWIDE, AS WELL AS PROMOTING CANCER RESEARCH IN AREAS OF INTEREST TO THE AGENCY.

The aim of the IARC Fellowships Programme is to provide young postdoctoral scientists from any country in the world with training in aspects of cancer research, ranging from biostatistics and epidemiology to mechanisms of carcinogenesis, so that they can return to their own country to develop and implement programmes in cancer research and/or cancer control. Historically, special emphasis has been given to the field of epidemiology and on training of benefit to low- and medium-income countries (LMICs).

With the start of the Courses Programme in 1968, IARC became a pioneer in holding basic epidemiology courses in countries with little or no experience in this area (e.g. China, Cuba, etc.). One course per year was usually organized in a different region of WHO. These courses were instrumental in stimulating interest in cancer epidemiology and in encouraging, identifying and supplying Fellows for further training. In addition

to basic epidemiology training courses, the IARC Courses Programme has broadened to include courses in the fields of cancer registration and screening, as well as more methodology-based courses covering a wide range of subjects at both basic and advanced levels.

The current activities of the Education and Training Group, including fellowships and courses, are described elsewhere in this report; in the following sections a brief historical perspective of the IARC Fellowship Programme is provided.