Re: Annual Report 1988/89

The Working Group went through its sixth year of activities after it was founded 1983. The basic structure has not changed: the Working Group members serve mainly as a platform for exchanging information on the matter and supporting various colleagues all over the world in organizing conferences and workshops. Through the activities of the members of the Working Group some young colleagues from developing countries could be supported in organizing study trips to other countries. The intensification of the student exchange activities could be the basis for new activities of the Working Group after its successful literature programme has been finished.

The literature support programme of Working Group 9 will be completed early 1990, with 1,500 books mailed to colleagues in Third World countries. The books have been sent to countries all over the world and the names of the recipients have been published in the IMIA Newsletter. There are still many colleagues who appreciate any kind of help in this context.
During 1989 the Working Group has started again to prepare a working Conference. Several approaches during the first years of the Working Group failed due to unforeseen difficulties in some developing countries. In the meantime, members of the Working Group tried to be of help to colleagues in these countries who were organizing local workshops and meetings.

In co-operation with the European and South East Asian Region of the World Health Organization, it is planned to have a Working Conference in New Dehli in January 1991. Preparatory meetings will be held in 1990 in India and hopefully will support the establishment of more Medical Informatics activities in this important country. The conference will deal with primary care systems. At the time of the conference, also a decision should be made on whether the Working Group is continuing its activities or its institutionalization. As in Working Group 1 of IMIA, it should also be a well-kept tradition to come to a change of command during such a working conference and to hand over the responsibilities of the Working Group to a new chairman, preferably from a developing country.

The major problem in organizing the work of the group are the enormous communication cost between the various countries and the time delays in communication with those colleagues who cannot be reached easily by telephone, fax, or computer-net. Further, many colleagues in developing countries have major problems to receive money for overseas trips, i.e. working conferences are nearly impossible without third party money. In addition, the organization of conferences of this type, with third party money and participants from Third World countries, is such a major effort that it cannot easily be done by any chairman who is caretaking the working group on a part-time basis beside a demanding job in a competitive environment.

The Working Group members, therefore, are extremely interested in the IMIA internal discussions of how to find new concepts of co-operation between scientists in different countries. They hope that MEDINFO 1989 Singapore will show alternative ways of promoting Health Informatics for Development.
Dear colleagues,

Enclosed please find a list of the members of IMIA Working Group 9 and a list of its corresponding members. Could you please check on whether your organization would like to nominate further corresponding members to our Working Group.

With kind regards,

Prof. Dr. med. O. Rienhoff

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