ITALY-LATIN AMERICA COOPERATION FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

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Since ten years the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS, the National Institute of Health in Italy) has started activities of technical and scientific international cooperation with Latin American countries concerning environment and health aimed at training and dissemination of scientific information on relevant public health issues.

The collaboration with Ecuador, started in 2003, fostered the cooperation activities, which in the following years have been enriched by exchanges and collaborations with academic and research institutions and non-governmental organizations from different Latin American countries in a framework of both bilateral and multilateral cooperation. We mention among others, the scientific and technical cooperation agreements between the ISS and the IFA (Corporación para el desarrollo de la producción y el medio ambiente laboral, Ecuador); the scientific and technical cooperation agreement between the ISS and the Instituto de Salud Pública of the Universidad Nacional (Colombia); the technical and scientific collaboration agreement among the ISS, the Istituto Nazionale per l’Assicurazione contro gli Infortuni sul lavoro (INAIL), the Department of Epidemiology of the Lazio Regional Government and the Universidad Tecnológica Equinoccial de Quito (Ecuador). Moreover, in recent years further collaborations with academic institutions in other Latin American countries have been developed.

The dissemination and training initiatives promoted by the ISS in the field of environment and public health have focused on various issues including prevention of asbestos-related diseases, waste-cycle, effects on human health of non-ionizing radiations, as well as the research methodology in environmental epidemiology. In the perspective of the widest dissemination of the international scientific evidence on these topics, as well as of the diffusion of the knowledge and experiences gained in Italy and in Latin American countries on these issues, technical and scientific open access documentation was produced in Spanish and Italian.

From 2009 to 2012 an international collaboration initiative was dedicated to the development of a network of academic and research institutions from European and Latin American countries aimed at training and promotion of scientific open access publishing in the field of public health. This activity was carried out in the framework of the NECOBELAC (NEtwork of COllaboration between Europe and Latin America and Caribbean countries) project (www.necobelac.eu), funded by the European Commission within the Seventh Framework Programme and coordinated by the ISS Publishing Unit. The NECOBELAC network also supported training initiatives in Latin American countries focused on environment and public health, which were performed with the active contribution of the Environmental Epidemiology Unit of the ISS Department of Environment and Primary Prevention and of the ISS Publishing Unit.

This collaboration has promoted the development of international cooperation initiatives in the framework of the Italian National Project on Asbestos (Progetto Amianto, www.iss.it/amianto), currently funded by the Ministry of Health and coordinated by the ISS
Department of Environment and Primary Prevention. These new cooperation activities are aimed to training and dissemination of scientific information on the prevention of asbestos-related diseases, and are addressed to those countries where the use of asbestos is still permitted, or only recently prohibited, with special interest to the Latin American region.

In line with the principles of a bi-directional cooperation, the training and dissemination activities promoted and/or co-organized by the ISS are designed to properly take into account different cultural contexts and languages, and they are characterized by mutual recognition and appreciation of existing experiences of the cooperating parties.

Publications produced within the Italy-Latin America cooperation

The most relevant papers produced by the ISS, often with Latin American partners, and published in the framework of the international cooperation activities described above and focused on the specific topics of this volume are listed, in chronological order (starting from the most recent):


De Castro P, Marsili D, Poltronieri E, NECOBELAC Working Team. NECOBELAC project. NEtwork of COllaboration Between Europe and Latin American-Caribbean countries. A bridge between


