



# **OTARG**

# **NEWSLETTER**

(Occupational Therapy Africa Regional Group)

January 2012

No. 16



Delegates at the OTARG Congress in Livingstone, Zambia, September 2011

**Member Countries**

Botswana  
Ethiopia  
Kenya  
Malawi  
Mauritius  
Namibia  
Nigeria  
Rwanda  
Sierra Leone  
South Africa  
Tanzania  
Togo  
Uganda  
Zambia

**Editor**

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**Office-bearers of OTARG:**

Chairperson:  
**Sarah Matovu, Uganda**  
[Sarah](#)  
Vice Chairperson:  
**Justice Mackenzi Nthitu, Botswana**  
Secretary  
**Patricia de Witt, South Africa**  
[patricia.de.Witt@wits.ac.za](mailto:patricia.de.Witt@wits.ac.za)  
Treasurer  
**Fasloen Adams South Africa**  
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Member at large /WFOT representative to OTARG  
**Albert Pascal, Tanzania**  
Student Representative  
**Tatenda Maphosa, Zimbabwe**  
Website: **Vivyan Alers, South Africa**  
[Vivyan.alers@gmail.com](mailto:Vivyan.alers@gmail.com)

**WFOT APPOINTMENTS 2010 - 2012**

Sharon Brintnell	President - Canada
Vice President	Anne Carswell - Canada
Executive Director	Marilyn Pattison - Australia
Vice President Finance	Samantha Shann – United Kingdom
Programme Coordinator for Education and Research	Alfred Ramukumba – South Africa
Programme Coordinator International Cooperation	Suchada Sakornsatian - Thailand
Programme Coordinator Promotion and Development	Richard Ledgerd – United Kingdom
Programme Coordinator Standards and Quality	Nils Erik Ness - Norway

## EDITORIAL

The 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Occupational Therapy African Regional Group (OTARG) has come and gone.

This Newsletter is mostly devoted to the Congress where you will find a report and also the full minutes of the AGM of OTARG which has been compiled by Pat de Witt, the new Secretary of OTARG.

The Congresses of OTARG keep the whole organisation together and have assumed enormous importance for the region. This time round we experienced more participation in so many ways. International figures gave brilliant keynote addresses, there were excellent papers presented. Please find a lovely report from Susan Coppola in the Newsletter It is wonderful for us to receive a report from an International Colleague and to see the event from her eyes. Thank you so much Susan.

Just about every participant attended the OTARG AGM, showing their interest in the organisation. There was more than one nomination for each position on the executive. It is a very healthy sign! An excellent executive has been democratically elected, representing a variety of regions in Africa, and we wish Sarah Matovu from Uganda, as our new Chairperson our very best wishes. You will find a profile on her in the Newsletter.

Eckiwe Kamanga and her dedicated team deserve our very grateful thanks for setting aside so much of their time and effort to passionately present this occupational therapy Congress in Livingstone. It shows what she and her professional colleagues are made of!! It isn't easy when funds are limited and there are very few occupational therapists and other professionals to call upon. It was such a huge success and thank you so much to you all. We had a wonderful time.

The next OTARG Congress will be in two years time in Zimbabwe. Not a

minute can be lost in the organisation of this event and all of us need to apply soon for grants and save up our pennies!!

We say good luck and many thanks to Professor Alfred Ramukumba from South Africa, our past Chairperson, and thank him for his great contribution. We hope that he will be involved in OTARG for many years to come.

Please look at the OTARG website for the history of OTARG which I have for many years religiously updated. Jenny Cooke our web-master has put the entire power point presentation on the web now and I hope that you will find it great fun.

We also have a lovely report from Christel Caronne on OT in Mauritius. Thank you Christel.

Rosemary Crouch Editor.

## OUR NEW CHAIRPERSON SARAH MATOVU



**Sarah Matovu (centre, in the background) at the Congress. On the left is Susan Coppola who has provided the Congress report. They are with a delegate on the right.**

Sarah Matovu is an Ugandan Occupational Therapist with a Masters in Occupational Therapy from the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, as part of the European Masters program. She is currently lecturing at the Occupational Therapy

School in Mulago Hospital in Kampala. She works as a Special Needs Coordinator for Watoto child care. She also mentors students doing the Masters qualifying course for the European Masters in Occupational Therapy.

### **REPORT ON THE 7<sup>TH</sup> OTARG CONGRESS HELD IN LIVINGSTONE, ZAMBIA, FROM 12<sup>TH</sup> TO 16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011**

Participants represented many of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. South Africans were the largest group for economic reasons. There were others from Zambia, Malawi, Ghana, Togo, Rwanda (represented by PTs who were working hard to develop OT there), Mauritius, Seychelles, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Uganda, Mozambique, Tanzania, and others.



**Sylvia Martins with other Mozambique Delegates.**

There were others from European countries who had developed working relationships on projects in Africa. Also present were several Canadians, including Sharon Brintnell the current WFOT President and Kit Sinclair of Hong Kong, former WFOT President. The one other OT from the USA at OTARG was Anne Marie Hansen of Duquesne University, who has been working in Tanzania.

The congress had one OT student who could afford to attend. This student,

Tatenda Mphosa of Zimbabwe by virtue of his presence and motivation, was elected to be the OTARG student representative. Africa is a large continent, and flights within are expensive. I spoke with an OT who travelled by bus for two days each way to attend the Congress.

I was thrilled that the University of North Carolina supported my attendance at this inspirational event. UNC also sponsored an OT from Malawi to attend, Dorothy Chinguo, a masters trained OT. Ms. Chinguo gave an impressive keynote presentation on disparities in the occupations of women and men. OTARG was also an opportunity for her to network with other OTs beginning OT Education programs in Africa.

**Education:** South Africa, which has a long established and rich history in OT, has been developing multiple relationships with other countries in the region to develop OT programs. Witwatersrand University, Cape Town University and other OT programs are in some way working to grow OT programs or services in other countries of the region. At present OTs can practice with a diploma, but there is strong interest in moving these programs up to bachelor's degree. Rehab Technicians are implementing Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR), an initiative by WHO to reach people in areas where rehabilitation services are needed. But there are issues of supervision and varied knowledge base of these service providers.

**African Context:** South African OTs serve in many of the leadership roles in OTARG, but that is shifting as OT grows in more countries of the region. Sarah Matovu, of Uganda, was elected the new OTARG Chairperson. I was inspired by the OT collective will to explicitly use power of occupation for the good. Much of African culture is built around interdependence, and it seemed

that culture of interdependence is within the profession as well. The stories I heard were never only about one person, nor about the therapist as the hero or even the only expert. They were about working with families and communities to enlist ingenuity, for example in fabricating a positioning device for a child with CP. The outcome of interventions was never about getting to a narrow goal of say, being able to sit up. Instead the outcome was about setting off a series of changes, like making it possible for a neighbour to watch a child with a disability so that the mother could have a respite or more likely to go make money working the field. It has been said that OT in Africa is more authentic, occupation-centred practice, and now I understand what was meant and how much African OT can add to the profession. One note I took: "humanizing OT is Africa's gift to the world", *Kronenburg*.

**Cross-generational and community perspective:** I was encouraged to present on my area of expertise, and offered a workshop titled *Occupation-based prevention for older adults and aging societies*. I was concerned about the relevance, but then realized that 14 million older people live in Africa. The percentage is low, but the numbers are high. The discussion in the workshop revealed that aging is an important concern of OTs, including those in paediatrics. African OTs shared many stories of working with grandmothers, and of their heavy burden in finances, household management and care giving. With the loss of many of their children to HIV/AIDS and other conditions, older people have become the bedrock of many family networks and communities. I heard far more stories of older persons as strained caregivers than older people as recipients of care. However, when the older person needed care, it fell upon already burdened women who were

near a breaking point from care giving. It became clear that OT has an imperative for a cross-generational approach to services in Africa.

**Emerging literature and scholarship:**

The first OT book about the region, *Occupational Therapy: An African Perspectives* (2010) edited by South African OTs Vivyan Alers and Rosemary Crouch, is a scholarly text filled with rich stories and analysis. I highly recommend it, and the proceeds go to OTARG, which operates on an extremely small budget.



**Rosemary Crouch & Vivyan Alers Eds**



**Authors present at the Congress, from left Kate Sherry, Eckiwe Katanga, Sarah Matovu, Jennifer Creek, Rosemary Crouch and Vivyan Alers.**

OT and OS research in Africa is reflected in the conference abstracts (to be posted on [www.otarg.org](http://www.otarg.org) the near future). It is difficult to devote time to research when service needs are great, yet the level of science at the community

translation level is impressive. The South African Journal of OT is high quality, and is not as well known on other continents as it should be.

**Policy:** These clinicians, educators and researchers repeatedly discussed the importance of linking their work to broader policy issues. The conference theme and each session abstract related to the UN Millennium Development Goals

(<http://www.beta.undp.org/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html>). The ICF (WHO, 2001) and the World Report on Disability (WHO, 2011) were referenced often.

#### Policy Level

- Link OT to broader policies and framework (MDG, ICF)
  - Move beyond charity model, fragmented and unsustainable projects
  - Occupation-centred programs should be synergistic with fighting poverty, injustice, and hunger

#### Education:

- Need for local education that addresses the cultural context, and retaining OTs in country
- Elevating from Diploma level training to Bachelors' level education
- Remain African in OT education

#### Practice:

- Build expertise in culturally situated practices that address family and community networks
- Share and expand model programs (e.g. Togo, Tanzania presentations)
  - Instead of occupational evolution "tread deeper" into the occupations that exist in Africa.
  - Economically sustainable local practices – community projects

#### Collaboration and Action:

- Take collaboration to a higher level

- "We know why and when to collaborate, but we don't know how." A Ramukumba
- "We don't have all the answers, but we have enough information to act." Justice M.Nthitu

**Professor Susan Coppola, MS, OTR/L, BCG, FAOTA**  
**Associate Professor**  
**Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy**  
**Department of Allied Health Sciences**  
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**Rozenn Botokro, Keynote speaker from Togo.**

#### **MINUTES OF THE BIENNIAL GENERAL MEETING OF OTARG HELD ON 13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011 HELD IN LIVINGSTONE, ZAMBIA.**

##### **1. WELCOME**

The chairperson, Alfred Ramukumba, welcomed all delegates and observers.

##### **2. APOLOGIES**

Brenda Ephriam (Vice Chairman)  
Lisa Wegner (Secretary)

Theresa Lorenzo (Chairperson of the Scientific Committee)

Judith van der Veen (Scientific Committee)

### **3. REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MEMBER AFRICAN COUNTRIES PRESENT**

Sharon Britnell (WFOT President)

Christel Couronne (Mauritius)

Ekwan Francis (Uganda)

Fiona Paulin (Seychelles)

Eckiwe Kamanga (Zambia)

Sandra Ciernioch (Swaziland)

Albert Pascal (Tanzania)

Rosemary Crouch (Newsletter)

Vivyan Alers (Web page)

Justice Mc Kenzie (Botswana)

Peter Ndaa (Ghana)

Americo dos Santos Ncuha (Mozambique)

Dorothy Chinguo (Malawi)

Tecla Mlambo (Zimbabwe)

Rosen Botokro (Togo)

Pat de Witt (South Africa)

Alfred Ramukumba (Chairperson)

Fasloen Adams (Treasurer)

### **4. AGENDA**

The agenda for the meeting was confirmed as no additional items were added by the members present.

### **5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of the previous meeting were made available to all member via the OTARG web site.

Minutes of the meeting were taken as read. There were no corrections.

The minutes were proposed by Rosemary Crouch and seconded by Fasloen Adams.

#### **5.1 OTARG MEMBERSHIP FEES**

Ms Adams requested that the committee consider raising the OTARG membership fees to support the work of the organisation. Current fees are:

- Individual membership \$5 per year (\$10 for 2 years)
- Student membership \$2.5 per year (\$5 for 2 years)
- Association fees > 50 members \$10 per year (\$20 for 2 years)

Association fees < 50 members \$20 per year (\$40 for 4 years). The treasurer was asked to compile a document that will be circulated to members outlining new membership fees for member countries to consider. The importance of fees that are accessible to both member countries and individual members was highlighted as well as the need to extend the membership to bring in more funds. WFOT outlined the benefits of membership to OTARG to individual OTs as well as the need to have some discretionary money to extend partnerships and the projects of the organisation.

#### **5.2 NEWSLETTER**

Rosemary Crouch reported that there had been two editions of the newsletter printed. The last newsletter had been translated in to French and thanks were extended to Rosenn Botokro. It was agreed that it should also be translated in to Portuguese.

It was further agreed that the newsletter and the translations will be posted on the OTARG web page. Rosemary

requested feedback and comment on the newsletter from members.

### 5.3 WEBPAGE

Vivyan Alers reported that many changes have been made to the web page and that it is successful communication tool. She agreed to investigate the different language options on the web page.

It was agreed that the scientific committee send the congress abstracts and authors contact details be posted on the web page but that the power point presentations for ethical reasons should not be there.

### 5.4 OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Vivyan Alers reported that the book which was an OTARG initiative. The current issues will have to be reprinted and a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition will be considered at the next OTARG Congress.

### 6. BIENNIEL REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON

Prof. Ramukumba presented the report for the past two years.

He thanked WFOT for their support over the past two years and the following office bearers for their contribution: Fasloen Adams (Treasurer), Lisa Wegner (Secretary), Rosemary crouch (Newsletter) and Vivyan Alers (Webpage) and 1<sup>st</sup> Editor of the book "Occupational Therapy: An African Perspective".

He also thanked all members of the local organising committee and scientific committee of the 7<sup>th</sup> OTARG Congress for their contribution to the success of the Congress.

### 7. TREASURERS REPORT

7.1 Ms Adams reported on the finances of OTARG over the past two years.

7.2 She highlighted the high service fees costs of the bank. She requested permission to investigate alternative financial institutions to see if a bank with lower services fess could be identified.

She was given a mandate to investigate and move the OTARG account to a financial institution where lower bank charged could be obtained.

### 8. ELECTION OF THE OFFICE BEARERS

Sharon Britnell (WFOT President) managed the elections

It was confirmed that the following offices were vacant:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- Member at Large (Additional Member)
- Student Member

All outgoing members were thanked for their contribution and Rosemary Crouch gave a special word of thanks to Alfred for all he had done for the organisation during his term of office.

The following persons were nominated and elected by secret ballot.

Office	Nominees	Elected
Chairperson	Sarah Matovu (Uganda) Modise Mogotsi (SA)	Sarah Matovu
Vice chairperson	Justice Mackenzie Nthitu (Botswana) Christel Couronne (Mauritius) Elewani Ramugodo (SA)	Justice Mackenzie Nthitu
Secretary	Pat de Witt	Pat de Witt

Member at large	Albert Pascal (Tanzania) Rozenn Botokro (Togo) Meghan Dawson (SA)	Albert Pascal
Newsletter	Rosemary Crouch (SA) Kerry-Lyn Armstrong (SA)	Rosemary Crouch
Web page	Vivyan Alers	Vivyan Alers
Student member	Tatenda Maphosa	Tatenda Maphosa

The new committee was congratulated on their appointment and will take office from Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

### 9. OTARG 8<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS

Chairperson called for nomination for hosting the 8<sup>th</sup> OTARG congress requesting that members consider the following principles when making a proposal.

Congresses have been held as follows:

- 1999 Mauritius
- 2001 Uganda
- 2003 Kenya
- 2005 Moshi
- 2007 Zanzibar
- 2009 Malawi
- 2011 Zambia

The congress should not be in South Africa, the venue must be easily accessible for all African delegates, travel and fees should be affordable but also be in a venue that will attract international delegates.

Two member countries bid for the congress: Zimbabwe and Mauritius. Both counties motivated their bid.

After a second round of voting the bid was awarded to Zimbabwe.



Tecla Mulambo (Zimbabwe) above, will organise the scientific committee and ask the Executive committee for assistance if needed.

### 10 NEW MATTERS

10.1 Sharon Britnell (WFOT President) requested that all member countries study the World report on disability and hold an event (symposium or meeting) to discuss the meaning and significance of this report for OTs in each country and then inform her that this has occurred. The details of this report will be presented on Thursday morning at the congress.

10.2 Lana van Niekerk (President of OTASA) reported that it was now possible for OT Associations in Africa to affiliate with OTASA (Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa) and receive the Journal and newsletter and be updated on all OT activities in South Africa.

10.3 Signatories of the OTARG account. Member counties were asked to approve a change in signatory and also to approve that the Secretary Prof P. de Witt be the co signatory on the account as the new Chairperson lives in Uganda. Motion:

The treasurer and the secretary have the authority to sign for transactions on behalf of OTARG.

The motion was proposed by Mauritius (Christel Couronne) and seconded by Tecla Mulambo ( Zimbabwe)

The motion was carried unopposed.

#### **11.NEW MATTERS AND DIRECTIONS**

It was requested that the registration of OTARG as a NGO in South Africa be investigated. Rosemary Crouch and Vivyan Alers were asked to do this and report to The OTARG Executive.

11.1 Motion: Rosemary Crouch and Vivyan Alers to investigate and register OTARG as NGO in South Africa. Proposed by Zambia(Eckiwe Kamanga) and Justice Mackenzie Nthitu (Botswana).The Motion was carried unopposed.

**Thanks to Professor Pat de Witt, Secretary, for this report.**

#### **REPORT FROM MAURITIUS**

The Occupational Therapists' Association in Mauritius has a new logo and we recently launched our website ([www.ota.mu](http://www.ota.mu)); though it is still under construction :) We changed the logo because of the current trend of work settings of occupational therapists in Mauritius. For the past 40 years, occupational therapists were solely working in the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and not for profit organisations; and presently we have occupational therapists working in the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions and more OTs working in not for profit organisations.

In regard to the website, due to the difficulty getting OTs attending meetings and organising group discussions, we thought that it would be good to have a

platform whereby we will share our knowledge, experiences and difficulties with our colleagues and at the same time, the population will know about the profession (Occupational Therapy).



**Christine Couronne at the Livingstone Congress**

#### **START SAVING FOR ZIMBABWE IN 2013!!!**

Website addresses are as follows: [www.otarg.org.za](http://www.otarg.org.za) and also the WFOT website at [www.wfot.org](http://www.wfot.org).

RBC

18/01/2012