



O.T.A.R.G NEWSLETTER

(OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AFRICA REGIONAL GROUP)

DECEMBER 2014



MEMBER COUNTRIES

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

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EDITORIAL

Greetings to the OTARG family and the O.T community at large. It has been while since our last newsletter, but I do hope I find everyone in good health as we also look forward to getting into a new year 2015. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep O.T.A.R.G friends and family updated on the events happening in the family's life and keeps the spirit of oneness alive across the miles.

We have faced some challenges especially some communication breakdowns. It is my great encouragement that we communicate more often, letting us know what is happening in your various countries, as we move toward keeping the OTARG family together.

The year 2014 has come and gone, and the pledge made at the 2013 OTARG Congress of promoting Occupational Therapy in Africa has not faded away. Occupational therapy training has commenced or is on the verge of commencement in more countries in Africa. The horizons are surely being expanded in Africa.

From promoting Occupational Therapy in Africa we are moving on to

Transforming health care in Africa: A move toward Occupational In this newsletter you will find the first announcement of the 9th OTARG Congress to be held in Uganda from the 7th to the 11th of September 2015.

These Congresses of OTARG keep the whole organisation together and have assumed enormous importance for the region. It is my encouragement that we start saving for the congress that is if we had not already started saving.

In this newsletter we also give you some reports on the great strides being made in some countries in terms of the training of Occupational therapists and/ or the promotion of Occupational therapy as a profession in Africa as a whole.

I hope to receive more articles from countries across Africa telling us about the advancements being made in relation to Occupational Therapy growth and service delivery.

Tatenda John Maphosa

Editor

9TH OTARG CONGRESS FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT



The Uganda Association of Occupational Therapists in collaboration with OTARG announces the **9th OTARG Congress in Kampala** scheduled for **7th – 11th September 2015**.

This is a great opportunity for occupational therapists and other healthcare professionals across the globe to come and experience the exciting conference plenary discussions as well as getting to understand the reality of the pearl of Africa. This congress is expected to stimulate a lot of debate on the use of Occupation for attainment of total health in Africa and the world over. The congress shall focus on finding a lasting solution to the health care burden in Africa through the use of occupation. We therefore, urge different health care professionals, policy makers, program managers, community volunteers, foundation bodies and international colleagues to participate at this high profile forum.

Conference Theme:

Transforming Healthcare in Africa; A move towards Occupation

Subthemes:

1. Research, policies and practices
2. Culture and diversity
3. Harmonization of occupational therapy education
4. International partnership
5. Global mental health
6. Community innovations in occupational therapy
7. Innovative solution to the growing burden of non communicable diseases

Venue: Hotel Africana, Kampala, Uganda. <http://hotelafricana.com>

Fee: Early Bird Registration ó USD 250 (before May 2015)

Late Registration ó USD 300 (From May 2015)

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NEWS FROM AROUND AFRICA

Progress of OT Education in Rwanda

In August 2011 the Kigali Health Institute (KHI) of Rwanda together with two Belgian University Colleges, Thomas More University College (Thomas More UC) and University College Ghent (HoGent) began a 2 year study entitled “**Occupational Therapy makes a start in Rwanda**”. The project was funded by the Flemish Interuniversity council (VLIR). The aim is to develop a Bachelor OT curriculum at KHI. However, prior to starting the program, the Rwandan Universities need to re-organize into one umbrella Rwandan University (now operational). So September 2014 would probably be the start date for this new education.

In September 2011 members of Rwandan and Belgium partners went to the Occupational Therapy Africa Regional Group Congress (OTARG) in Zambia to gather information on Occupational therapy in Africa. During the congress a network and resource of good practices was built. Occupational Therapy (OT) curricula from neighboring countries such as Uganda and Kenya as well as Bachelor OT curricula from Zimbabwe and South Africa were obtained. These were analysed and compared so that Rwandan colleagues and interested parties could look at the suitability in the Rwandan context.

In February 2013 an interdisciplinary workshop with occupational therapy as the main topic was attended by allied health professionals from Rwanda and KHI staff. These participants were given an overview of OT with its potential to benefit the people of Rwanda. This was followed by

a curriculum validation workshop based on Rwandan educational principles. The KHI is now awaiting the final agreement from the Rwandan Ministries of Education and Health before taking the OT education course further.

In August 2013 before the OTARG congress in Zimbabwe, a road map with actions to be undertaken was made by KHI and the Belgian University colleges. A presentation entitled “**Occupational Therapy in Rwanda, an experience**” was given so that congress delegates were shown the challenges and evaluation of the project thus far. Interested OTs and OT lecturers with different backgrounds and interests have shown their willingness to share their knowledge and skills in support of KHI’s OT training.

Experienced lecturers from Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda were present at this OTARG congress and together with Rwanda and Burundi, are members of the East African Committee. One of the aims is the working together of East African OT educators to improve quality and collaboration between the different OT schools. Also delegates from countries who hope to start OT education or who started recently decided to exchange ideas, experiences and knowledge with WFOT and OTARG as facilitator and advisor. Attending the OTARG congress is not only important to broaden networking, it is also an enrichment to personal and professional life.

We would like to thank the organisers and participants of the OTARG congress for the new knowledge, skills, attitudes and all the good experiences that have enriched our lives especially the experience of UBUNTU.

Anne-Mie Engelen (HoGent) and Lief Schoofs (Thomas More UC)

OT TRAINING IN GHANA PRESSING ON

In the 2013 issues of the O.T.A.R.G. newsletter, the Occupational therapy training program in Ghana had just admitted its first cohort into the four year degree programme. These students have successfully completed their first year which was climaxed with a six-week practice placement. A second cohort of twenty students has enrolled for the 2013/14 academic year.

For the first time in Ghana and at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital (the premier hospital in the country), there is a Department of Occupational Therapy. The Occupational Therapy department currently have two dedicated Occupational Therapists, faculty from other Allied Health professions and two supporting staff that facilitate the training program as well as run an occupational therapy clinic for patients. Occupational Therapy service delivery and awareness creating has begun mostly in the Greater Accra Region, one of the ten regions in the country.

Creating awareness has been the main focus of the department this year. The department as well is strengthening the existing occupational therapy departments in the two mental hospitals in Accra, the capital city. It is interesting to know of OT involvement with the commencement of a specialist Stroke Unit at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital where the role of occupational therapy in rehabilitation will be more evident.

The pioneer occupational therapy students have been more instrumental and involved in the OT awareness creation in Ghana. They have deepened their understanding of the discipline from a point where they did not know about the existence of the profession to the point of telling people about Occupational Therapy during the

University of Ghana, School of Allied Health Sciences Open Day held in late September 2013. From the students perspective during their six weeks practice placement education, direct Occupational Therapist educators support was very limited and call for more Occupational Therapists to serve as role models to provide guidance to students. They were keen when they were supported during their last two weeks on placement by three Occupational Therapists from Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust (NHCFT) UK, who are partnering the department in the training program. So far, the training program has been successful however, there are still some challenges such as the urgent need for OT practitioners on the field to serve as role models for the students when they are on practice placement.

Ellen S. Adomako (faculty member)

Peter Ndaa (faculty member)

Derrick Antwi (OT Student)

***Rosemary Doe-Asinyo Xorlanyo
(OT Student).***

Jerry Nyade Yao (OT student)

Occupational Therapy in Mauritius – The year 2014

In Mauritius, Occupational Therapy is still tangled in people's mind as they do not know much about it unless they have received the service in their lifetime. The noble profession kept toiling its way slowly but surely on the island. The Occupational Therapists' Association (OTA) played an important role in this evolution of Occupational Therapy by promoting the profession as well as helping the occupational therapists on the island to affiliate themselves to the global team of Occupational Therapists.



The OTA of Mauritius exists since 1997 in the country. It has attempted to promote the local occupational therapists since its foundation on the island. The OTA celebrated the World Occupational Therapy Day (WOTD) like each year with the focal aim to promote the profession on the national level. The World Federation of Occupational Therapists' theme for the year 2014 was "United in Diversity". Mauritius being a multi-cultural society, this theme was well accepted for the celebration.

The objectives set by the OTA for this year's celebration were:

1. To commemorate the World Occupational Therapy Day in Mauritius.
2. To promote the profession on a national level.
3. To create awareness among potential employers on Occupational Therapy and the different services provided by the professionals.
4. To invite Managers of companies in relation to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and illustrate how their financial aid has helped many NGOs till now to employ occupational therapists to provide rehabilitation to children and adolescents with disability.

The CSR has been established in Mauritius since 2009. It is a scheme whereby private sectors spend 2% of their profits. One of the projects that CSR programmes undertake is to support approved Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) assisting people with disability. Here in the country, the biggest issue among these NGOs is how to get financial aid in order to employ an occupational therapist for rehabilitation. Hopefully, the CSR scheme is here to solve the matter. CSR funds from private companies help to finance the

project to employ an occupational therapist as well as the procurement of equipment for rehabilitation.

Therefore, the celebration of the WOTD for this year was an opportunity to invite those companies to discover the profession as well as witnessing its emergence in the NGOs. As part of the programme the OTA invited some Directors of the NGOs to present on how OTs have improved the quality of life of the beneficiaries and that of their families. Among the guests there were CSR Managers of Companies, Directors of NGOs, occupational therapists and occupational therapy students. It was also a golden opportunity to inform the Directors of those NGOs who do not know much about Occupational Therapy and how they can write projects to ask for CSR funding for a rehabilitation section in their respective institutions.

The event created awareness among those present. The OTA will keep on to work towards creating job opportunities for qualified occupational therapists and preparing the occupational therapy students for the job market in Mauritius though the profession is still making its due place.

Sahityanarainsingh GUTTY
Occupational therapist
President of the OTA (Mauritius) – 2014
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OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY **EDUCATION IN MALAWI**

In Malawi we are working towards a 5 year plan of opening an Occupational Therapy course at the College of Medicine in Blantyre in 2019.

We have had the Occupational Therapy Association of Malawi (OTAM) curriculum and constitution approved by WFOT. We are building professional partnerships and agreements with the Government of Malawi, the College of Medicine and foreign organizations interested in supporting the program. OTAM meets quarterly to share the progress and plan towards the next steps.

We are also working towards training more Malawians as Occupational Therapists to be involved in the future of the program. We currently have 1 Rehab Tech planning to begin his Bachelors of OT at Western Cape in South Africa in 2015 and 3 Occupational Therapists planning on beginning their Master's training in 2015.

OTAM has opened a website which is <http://otamalawi.com>. This site is a work in progress but will contain updates about the progress of opening the course and information about Malawian's seeking sponsorship towards their studies!

Kate Loveday

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY TRAINING IN MADAGASCAR

In November 2014 there was a meeting attended by Dr Sonia (Ministry of Public Health), Professor Adeline (University of Antananarivo, responsible for occupational therapy faculty) and myself.

The meeting resolved that:

The occupational therapy education program will begin in January 2015, exact dates still to be confirmed.

16 students have applied, of who 10 will be selected to study occupational therapy. It was decided that the selection committee would be members of the faculty, and myself.

The first year will be compromised of 2 semesters, each approximately 3 months in duration, totalling a 6 months academic year.

The curriculum for the first year needs to be submitted to the University for approval in December.

The curriculum for the second and third year will be written in January/February 2015, with a validation meeting in February/March 2015. All partners specifically involved in the education of the students will be given opportunity to input on the curriculum during the validation meeting.

The 1st year will be at the venue of the University of Antananarivo, the 2nd and 3rd years at the IFP. Logistical discussions, such as finalising the rooms at the IFP, will happen prior to the curriculum validation meeting.

There is not yet funding available to employ full-time teachers for the 2nd and 3rd years. We surely hope for a successful launch of our program in Madagascar as we seek to maintain the theme of the last OTARG Congress in Zimbabwe of "Promoting Occupational Therapy in Africa".

We look forward to continued partnerships with the OTARG family in making the occupational therapy education program a reality.

*Anri-Louise
Growing the Nations Therapy
Programmes*

Contact Our Family

O.T.A.R.G website:

www.otarg.org.za

WFOT website:

www.wfot.org.au

Remember 'the ones who need us the most, are the ones who cannot reach us', let this profession continue to lead you to touch people's lives.

START SAVING FOR UGANDA

7 - 11 SEPTEMBER 2015

&

WFOT - SOUTH AFRICA 2018