



OTARG NEWSLETTER

(Occupational Therapy Africa Regional Group)

March 2005 No.7

Member Countries

Botswana
Kenya
Mauritius
Namibia
Nigeria
South Africa
Tanzania
Uganda

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EDITORIAL

The publication of this Newsletter has been delayed as we have been awaiting the second announcement of the 4th OTARG Congress in Tanzania in August 2005.

This Newsletter is full of the most exciting news. Make sure you read and share every item with another occupational therapist or student!

We now have the information about the 4th OTARG Congress, which will be found in the Newsletter. What an exciting event it is going to be!! I hope to see you all there so that we can keep up this wonderful tradition.

A Newsletter of this kind is also vital in keeping OTARG together in informing occupational therapists in Africa about the progression of the Profession. I think it should also be spread to Governments and WHO Africa offices but we are severely hampered by lack of finance.

I am asking OTARG members to explore avenues for funding of the Newsletter and to bring their findings to the OTARG meeting at the Moshi Congress. It would be lovely if we could send out the Newsletter at least twice a year, one in March and one in September.

This newsletter is covering the OTARG Informal Meeting held in Cape Town in April last year during the WFOT Meeting, and the OTARG Open Meeting held in November 2004 in Kampala and the Tri-nation Meeting sponsored by Skillshare. There is a report on the WFOT Meeting as well.

As with the last Newsletter, I will be sending this Newsletter to as many African countries as I can in order to stimulate new membership. We need to make an effort to recruit more African countries as OTARG is now established, and is making a major contribution to Occupational Therapy in Africa. We must keep it rolling!

As always I must state again that our continued strong liaison with WFOT is of great importance thereby strengthening our efforts to promote occupational therapy in Africa.

Rosemary Crouch, Editor

OTARG OPEN MEETING HELD ON 30/11/04 AT SITAR RESTAURANT KAMPALA

Members Present:

1. Mr Ndiga Dan -OTARG Chairman
2. Mr. Kamwesiga Julius -WFOT Delegate Uganda
3. Mr Kariuki Daniel - WFOT Delegate Kenya
4. Mr. Dani M Swai - Chairman Congress 2005 Organizing Committee OTARG
5. Mr. Godfrey L. Mbowe - Tanzania
6. Ms Rosemary Kauzeni - Tanzania
7. Ms Rachel Kansiiime – OTARG Secretary

Word from the chair

The Chairman welcomed members to the open meeting of OTARG. He informed members that the essence of the meeting was to get updates on the forthcoming OTARG Congress scheduled for 11th-15th August 2005. He informed members, that in the past, organization of the congress was done jointly which this time is not the case.

Update from the chairman of the OTARG Tanzania Committee

- Venue is: UHURU HOSTEL MOSHI. It is a modern facility, close to KCMC. It is relatively cheap, so most people will be able to afford to attend.
- Four daily sessions, with four key note addresses
- Need is for a Key note address from Uganda on Palliative care.
- The chairman informed members of the criteria for choosing a keynote address speaker on palliative care. Uganda members agreed to nominate a member and send the name to the chairman organizing the Scientific Programme.
- Subcommittees include:
- Venue and accommodation committee
- Publicity committee
- Scientific committee
- Social committee (entertainment evening, sight-seeing, booking safari)

Members noticed that the element of education and research was missing. The chairman suggested that education and research issues to be captured during the congress and be given much emphasis.

The scientific committee in Tanzania is handling the abstracts and will design the entire scientific programme.

Funding - The Chairman Mr Dan Ndiga will transfer OTARG money left over from Mombasa at least by December 31st. Meanwhile accountability of the funds is being observed and a refund of money used so far will be made to Mr Dani Swai

Website - Tanzania is putting up a website to advertise for the congress and later OTARG can decide on whether to continue running it or not

Logo competition

This is being run for an Africa OT Logo and Motto. The competition will be announced on the website as part of the congress and winners will be announced in the congress.

Way forward

- The Chairman to send photos of the past congresses to Dani for the photo gallery
- Dani Swai to contact Julius for past congress photos
- The Chairman is to send lists of members to the Dani Swai chairman of the OTARG congress committee.
- Payment of membership fees. The Chairman informed members that membership fees are always collected during congress members suggested that a committee be instituted in the member countries to conduct OTARG business, this idea is to be further discussed in the next OTARG congress.

MINUTES OF THE INFORMAL OTARG MEETING HELD AT THE PRESIDENT

Hotel Cape Town

Thursday 29th April 2004

Members present:

Daniel Kariuki - WFOT Delegate Kenya
Charles Bulinda Lirhunde - WFOT Delegate Tanzania
Samantha Shann - WFOT PCO and OTARG member
Jacqueline Laurent - WFOT Delegate Mauritius
Helga Burger - WFOT Delegate Namibia
Alfred Ramukumba - WFOT Delegate South Africa
Meena Laloo - 2nd Alt, WFOT Delegate South Africa
Rosemary Crouch, OTARG Committee member
Julius Kamswiga - WFOT Delegate Uganda
Frank Kronenberg, Observer from the Netherlands

Rosemary Crouch was asked to chair the Meeting.

Matters arising from the previous minutes:

- The Mombasa Congress
The Meeting agreed that the 3rd OTARG Congress in Mombasa was a great success. Charles Bulinda asked the Kenya Delegate what had happened to the Congress profit money, since it is urgently needed in Tanzania for the development of the Congress in Moshi in 2005. Dan Karuiki said that himself, Frank Karanga, Loise Tanui and Mr Ngwemba were committed to

obtaining this money. Carolyn Webster past President of WFOT had promised to compile a treasurer's report from the Mombasa Congress and send the financial statements to OTARG. It has not yet been received

- Funds for the Newsletter.

Samantha Shann apologised that money was not available from the British Association of Occupational Therapy, as had been previously thought but suggested that the meeting formulate a project proposal for WFOT in this regard.

New Matters

- Helga Burger spoke about the importance of strategic planning in OTARG. This should be brought to the next meeting. She also wanted us to discuss the fact that the International Cupertino Project Group of WFOT was in the process of discussing "the voice of OTARG in Africa - is it strong enough?" This is also a subject for debate at the next meeting and we are expecting some firm suggestions from the WFOT Project Group to assist us.
- Alfred Ramukumba also challenged the meeting by asking, "what bargaining power does OTARG have in Africa?" This should also be discussed at the next meeting in Moshi and could also be a subject for a Key address at the Congress. A long debate ensued.

The meeting ended timeously and a meeting was planned for Moshi in August 2005 during the Congress.

Rosemary Crouch, South Africa, Stand-in Chair

OTARG NETWORK

UGANDA

Celebrating 10 years of occupational therapy in Uganda

Occupational Therapists in Uganda celebrated 10 years of their existence in Uganda. It was December 10th 2004. Activities to mark the day included a walk from the city Centre to the school, entertainment by children, and an exhibition at the school. This was presided over by Minister for gender and disability.

A workshop to sensitise opinion leaders and prospective employers was organised in conjunction with Skill-share and was held at Fairway hotel. Several occupational therapists working in different settings made presentations on their roles and emphasis was on the relevance of occupational therapy in the care of different patients.

Recognition was given to individuals who have contributed to the growth and development of the

profession. Among the renowned occupational therapists were Mrs Nightingale Kalinda and Mrs Kabanda Specioza.

It was a colourful occasion and raised a lot of awareness about Occupational Therapy.

Trination Meeting November 29th - 30th 2004

This was organised by Skill-share International and it took place in Kampala. The countries represented were: Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. A mini-OTARG Open meeting was held and the Tanzania team briefed members on the progress of the Congress.

The aim of the Trination Meeting was to bring the East African occupational therapists together to share ideas and challenges and to be empowered to develop the profession. The facilitators were mainly from Skill-share and the Uganda management institute of Uganda. It was beneficial and good for us to have covered and discussed issues pertaining to the profession.

Appointment of occupational therapists in the civil service

Several occupational therapists have been appointed and several adverts are being run for qualified occupational therapists. This is a great motivation to us and to those who are still in the training.

Occupational therapy degree course

The proposal still remains. The College of Health Sciences has not yet fully taken off, but some interested occupational therapists are still looking for sponsorship to upgrade to a master's level to be able to teach on the course. Information on possible sponsorship is very much needed.

Occupational therapy school.

Four full time tutors were appointed last year and are assisting Julius Kamwesiga to run the school. The enrolment has gone up from an average of 8 to 16. So in future we will be having more occupational therapists qualifying to meet the enormous need we have in the country.

Uganda Association Of Occupational Therapists (U.A.O.T.)

UAOT will be holding their AGM this month to elect a new vice President and Treasurer. Mr. Andrew Mubangizi is still President and Mr Nelson Kirigwa succeeded Rachel Kansiime as Secretary.

Rachel Kasiime, Secretary of OTARG

MAURITIUS

August 2004 - The second batch of students started the Occupational Therapy Bsc Honours course held at the University of Mauritius. The Coordinator Ms Imme Shipham, from South Africa is doing a wonderful job.

The Education Committee of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists has been approached for recognition of the standard of the course and we are awaiting a favourable answer.

The University of Mauritius has already advertised the third Occupational Therapy Course to start in August this year. We are well on our way but not without difficulties as you can guess.

In February this year we were so fortunate as to receive the visit of the President of WFOT who was on a private visit in the island.

It was an opportunity to introduce Professor Kit Sinclair to the Occupational Therapy world in Mauritius.

Official visits were organized to the Vice Chancellor of the University, the Dean of the Faculty of Science, the Coordinator of the Occupational Therapy course. A delegation of the first batch of Occupational Therapy students was able to voice their opinions about the course.

On another day, Professor Sinclair was received at the Ministry of Health where she had a long talk with the Principal Medical Officer Dr Ramyeed.

At a lunch meeting, Kit Sinclair met some of the occupational therapists that work in the public and private sectors.

Last but not least the President of WFOT was taken on a visit to an Occupational Therapy Department where several children made her welcome with disabilities and their parents.

Although the visit of Professor Sinclair was short we endeavored to show her a glimpse of the work achieved by occupational therapists in our small island.

Jacqueline Laurent, Chairperson Mauritius Association of Occupational Therapists. WFOT Delegate

NAMIBIA



Namibian Association of Occupational Therapists

Someone told me long ago
There's a calm before the storm

I know, and it's been coming for sometime
When it's over so they say
It'll bring a sunny day I know, shining down like water

I wanna know, have you ever seen the rain?
I wanna know, have you ever seen the rain?
Coming down on a sunny day
(John Fogerty)

This is how Namibia can best be described at present, not only when discussing the good rainy season, but also when discussing the situation of occupational therapy in our country.

Unfortunately, figuratively spoken, we are still in the calm awaiting the storm. Due to the stringent governmental financial situation, all governmental vacancies have been frozen, resulting in quiet and closed down occupational therapy departments. We have started an action plan, based on one of the objectives of the Health Act, which states that the occupation therapy profession "should assist in the promotion of the health of the population of Namibia". A letter conveying our deepest concern about the situation has been forwarded to the Interim Allied Health Professions Council. This matter will be taken to the Minister of Health and Social Services and hopefully we will be able (at last) to meet the Minister. The vision of the NAOT to train Namibians as occupational therapists locally will be part of the agenda for this meeting.

On the sunny side, the Occupational Therapy Profession at present is the only Allied Health Profession with an active 'continuous professional development' programme (CPD), due to commitment and hard work from our therapists. Most private practices have organized study groups, which are free of charge and accessible to all OT's wishing to attend these groups. Except for the impact these groups have on the knowledge and skills base, these groups have a spin-off because of being most valuable and positive in term of the social interaction within our OT community.

The NAOT at present is on the search for "sponsors", who would like to assist therapists from Namibia to join in the wonderful event of the OTARG Congress and become active members of the occupational therapy community of Africa.

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KENYA

1. KOTA held its annual scientific conference on 24th to 27th of November 2004. It was attended by 35 % of the registered members. During this meeting, the then acting chairman and acting treasurer, Samson Bwire and Noelina S. Sorre respectively were elevated and confirmed to their offices. The secretary Mr. Naftaly Murage was elected unopposed. (All for a further two-year term.)

2. The chairman and the secretary represented KOTA in a tri-national (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania) meeting in Kampala Uganda on 29th - 30th November 2004. This meeting, organized by Skillshare International, brought together occupational therapists from three East African Associations to share their experiences in management and development of their individual Country Association and the profession. Also of importance in this forum was the exploration of a possibility of the three countries to form a regional association in the near future.

3. As concerns the OTARG Congress in Tanzania we have communicated this to our members. KOTA is exploring various ways of assisting members financially to enable them attend.

Greetings from the Chairman Mr. Bwire
Thank you
Murage N.N.

SOUTH AFRICA

The highlight for South African occupational therapists in 2004 had been the hosting of the WFOT Council meeting in May in Cape Town - a first in this country. The unselfish commitment and dedicated hard work of the organising committee proved to be very successful and greatly appreciated by all the 70 delegates. We ordered the perfect sunny weather, had the perfect Cape Town scenic views, the perfect comfortable venues and true perfect African hospitality. The compliments were endless. What was also rewarding was that some of the delegates stayed on and presented at the OTASA (Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa) Congress. Many fruitful debates and interesting research were presented. An opportunity that should not have been missed.

It was so good to meet some of our African delegates. It provided opportunities to discuss various African related issues e.g. few academics had a meeting discussing educational needs in Africa, an OTARG meeting was held, a WFOT working sub-group discussed and planned issues around obtaining profiles of African OTs, developing a database, developing a supportive network throughout Africa, encouraging student involvement, sponsorships, unemployment amongst OTs, development of our website and the marketing of OT in Africa. A commitment had

been made to have a strategic planning meeting at the next OTARG congress.

If there is anyone interested in helping with any of the above projects to please contact their countries delegate or Samantha Shann (WFOT PCO – International Co-operation) at Samantha.Shann@northumbria.ac.uk. We are aware that resources are minimal in various countries but as mentioned before in our last newsletter, we can keep the flame burning and get things done with some creative thinking.

OTASA values interaction amongst OT's throughout Africa thus remains committed to developing communication. We want to encourage other countries to maintain communication with us so that we can share resources and develop OTARG. There is so much amongst us and it would be a pity if it were lost due to practical reasons. We can be leaders on various issues.

Students will be encouraged to participate at the next OTARG congress and we look forward to that.

Detailed report about the Council meeting written by Rosemary Crouch was published in WFOT Bulletin Volume 50 November 2004.

Dain van der Reyden (1st Alternate Delegate) captured the highlights of the council meeting as a guest editorial in the November 2004 issue of the South African Journal of Occupational Therapy.

Best wishes for colleagues in Tanzania as they organise the 2005 OTARG congress.

Visit of website for OTASA activities at www.otasa.org.za

Meena Lalloo

OTARG delegate for South Africa, second alternate delegate for South Africa.
rlalloo@uwc.ac.za

TANZANIA

The Strategic Plan for 2005-2010 is in place at last and we are having regular meetings to implement it. The document includes action plans and focuses on:

- Developing human resources i.e. the process of getting the Tanzanians into the school and to hopefully be self-sufficient by 2010.
- Developing the infrastructure for training e.g. the OT school building,
- International collaboration
- Budget and Finance

Collaboration with MEDUNSA in South Africa is being established. The purpose is to get assistance from Medunsa for the upgrading of the OT diploma to a degree. The curriculum needs to be developed and implemented. We are looking at a one course to upgrade diplomas to degrees.

Number of students in the course.

9 students have been admitted for first year. In second year there are 7 students and in third year there are 5.

The school is still short of a tutor for OT Psychiatry

Christa Meyer, Senior Lecturer, Department of Occupational Therapy Tumaini University, Moshi.

2ND ANNOUNCEMENT

THE 4TH OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AFRICAN REGIONAL GROUP (OTARG) CONGRESS

In Search for Identity.

The Tanzanian Occupational Therapy Association (TOTA), on behalf of OTARG invite you to the 4th OTARG Congress to be held in Tanzania from August 15th - 19th, 2005 at the Uhuru Hostel in Moshi.

The website for the Congress is to be found at www.ot-tanzania.org
For questions please e-mail: otarg4@yahoo.com.

It is important to widely advertise this wonderful event to as many occupational therapists and other professionals as possible. This time the Congress organisers are keeping costs as low as possible so that every occupational therapist and student can attend.

Our previous tradition of Congresses has shown these events to be relevant in terms of occupational therapy in Africa, addressing the special needs and always has the privilege of attracting expertise from other parts of the world. Keynote speakers this time are from Canada, Uganda and South Africa.
The Congress will be preceded by an Education Day.

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE

**Dani Swai
Chairman, Steering Committee, OTARG 4**

March 2005 RBC