

NEWS FROM MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

December 2013 – February 2014

ARGENTINA

Occupational Therapy is really a growing profession in Argentina

The big news that we would like to share with other countries, is the approval of our “Ley de Ejercicio Profesional” or “National Law for the Practice of Occupational Therapy” which has already been approved by the Deputies (Representatives) of our government's Congress. We still need the approval of the Senators and this is an essential step. It was very important for us to have the support of the WFOT through letters from the President E Sharon Brintnell to some of the National Congress Representatives.

Other news is our participation in the CLATO Congress, which means a moment of getting together occupational therapists of Latin America. These were moments of sharing ideas and thoughts about our professional practice in this area of the world.

The last thing to share is that we are right now working in our National Association (AATO) in getting approval of some OT Specialties and also reviewing the way of having more members. It is not obligatory to be an association member in order to work as an OT in Argentina, so we are thinking of attractions for participation. Always happy to listen to ideas from other countries.

Eager to meet many of you in Japan.

Carolina Alchouron
WFOT Delegate Argentina

BELGIUM

National:

Since January 2013, 8.422 occupational therapists have been registered in order to be authorized to work in Belgium. We are now working with the Ministry of Health on the evaluation of continuing education. This procedure is planned for all the paramedical profession and it will be a guarantee of quality for all patients in our country. Foreign OT also have to apply for registration in order to work in Belgium. Information about registration procedure is available on our websites. www.ergobel.be

Inscription with the National Health refunding organisation (INAMI-RIZIV) is also mandatory in order to work in private practice according to the new legislation. In December 2013, 726 occupational therapists have received the approbation to work in private practice. Despite the fact that all educational programmes are WFOT approved, some occupational therapists have encountered problems to get the qualification equivalence in France and in the Netherlands.

Philippe Meeus has been elected as President of the national association.

Dutch-speaking regional association:

In July 2013, the first 11 master students graduated. The programme is a joint venture of high schools and universities in the Dutch-speaking region.

The association participates actively in the REVA fair (biennial fair and symposium), EXPO60+, "Move for Parkinson Classic",...

Development of a professional profile such as guidelines for home-based OT, description of competences, new trends, vision and tasks, according to COTEC and WFOT documents are studied in collaboration with the universities.

Residential care is developing and a project for home-based OT has been extended, including analysis of the needs of caregivers of elderly, difficulties to find independent OTs,...

In May 2013 a student won a prize for an informative game. It has been developed to enable elderly people to express their feelings and concerns when moving to residential care.

French-speaking regional association:

The association organizes each year a session during which one student of each of the 7 schools present his or her final work (TFE). This is a way to promote their work and give the newly qualified OTs an opportunity to speak in front of a large public meeting. We hope this experience will encourage them to participate to congresses in the future. The association was on April 3-4 at the fair "Soins & Santé" organized for the health professions.

Some groups (geriatric, neurology, home care,...) are very active and are present on our regional website, where everybody can find information on their meetings and research. 'Independant OT' is the newborn group and is working on the promotion of OT home intervention to patients and to doctors. A scientific group has also been created to work on a new pamphlet for the promotion of OT.

Continuing education will be an obligation and the regional association is planning a seminar to inform the members of their obligations and also to meet their needs for continuing education

The association's online bookshop is offering special prices to our members and is one of our actions to increase membership.

Marlies Suetens
WFOT Delegate Belgium

Claire Valentin
President FNBE

DENMARK

Everyday rehabilitation and 75 years of Occupational Therapy in Denmark

The Kingdom of Denmark has a population of 5.6m people encompassing some 8,000 practising occupational therapists and students. In 2013 the Danish Association of Occupational Therapists is celebrating its 75th Anniversary. The development of the occupational therapy profession in Denmark has always been closely linked to the development of the welfare state. Two major factors have led to the strengtning of occupational therapy in Denmark in recent years:

- 1) Welfare State 2.0: The Danish welfare system is undergoing major changes due to globalization, fiscal tightening, new technology and an aging population. This development has favored a rehabilitating approach - and occupational therapy.
- 2) The Local Government Reform of 2007 transferred responsibility for training and rehabilitation services from hospitals to new, larger local governments (except for some specialised training).

The Danish Association of Occupational Therapists has in cooperation with local governments introduced and developed the concept of 'everyday rehabilitation'. It is a model for community-based delivery of rehabilitation services. The aim of everyday rehabilitation is to facilitate the day-to-day living of elderly citizens; the focus is on the everyday life of the person as a whole. It is not restricted to functional training and achieving independence but also strengthening personal relationships and links to social communities. The local governments have seen a big advantage in transforming some of their services to elderly citizens from traditional passive care to activity training and rehabilitation. Today everyday rehabilitation is the norm in all local governments.

At present 25 % of practicing Danish occupational therapists work in hospitals (40 % before the reform), 1.5 % in private practice, the rest in local governments. In hospitals occupational therapists are developing a new function in emergency departments doing assessments of patients' level of function.

Due to the increasing burden on the healthcare system from the 'aging' demographics, there is pressure on healthcare professionals to present innovative and cost-effective models. This development has resulted in new roles for occupational therapists (more coaching, facilitation, coordination and consultative competencies) and has also put rehabilitation and occupational therapy on the general political agenda.

Gunner Gamborg
WFOT Delegate Denmark

FINLAND

TOI's occupational therapy's colloquium has met throughout 2013. The colloquium is an open forum which allows members to promote scientific discussions in reference to occupational science. The colloquium congregates via Skype. The chairman is Anna-Liisa Salminen, PhD, OT and the second permanent expert is Greta Häggblom-Kronlöf, PhD, OT. Participants in the colloquium bring forth topics and participate in discussions. The discussions are confidential. TOI believes it is important to keep up scientific discussions and support further studies because university level study of occupational therapy is not available in Finland.

The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture has enacted spending cuts in technical colleges, which has also targeted occupational therapy education. The decrease in study opportunities and seizure affect mostly East Finland. TOI has protested to save occupational therapy degrees. East Finland has a shortage of occupational therapists and the national unemployment rate for occupational therapists is 1.5%.

TOI was part of the 'Speech-impaired' week event, where they raised awareness of occupational therapy. The event was coordinated by an expert, occupational therapist Satu Railosvuo, who has extensive experience in working with the speech-impaired.

There will be spending cuts in the Finnish municipalities. Almost 30 out of 320 municipalities have undergone co-determination that has led to layoffs. More co-determination talks were held in the fall, which is worrisome due to the fact that 60% of occupational therapists in Finland work for the municipalities.

Ulla Niutanen
WFOT 1st Alternate Delegate, Finland

GERMANY

Congress

In May 2013 the German association (DVE) held its 58th congress at Bielefeld/Northrhine-Westfalia under the motto "Einfach handeln!" That means "simply acting" or "acting in an easy way", which is the key method of our profession counselling clients.

It was an inspiring and vibrant conference with more than 1,300 attendants, 70 oral sessions, 40 workshops, about 50 poster presentations and an exhibition throughout 3 days. You can read and see impressions about the congress with a lot of photos and the inaugural speech of Professor Ulrike Marotzki on the website www.dve.info.

In the General Meeting two colleagues received the Badge of Honour (combined with life membership) for their outstanding service for DVE and the profession:

- ❖ Mieke le Granse for her activities supporting DVE to bring forward the academization of the profession in Germany.
- ❖ Christa Berting-Hünecke for 19 years of engagement as chief-editor for DVE's journal "Ergotherapie und Rehabilitation".

Students in DVE

In the past only students from 3 year education programmes were represented in DVE. This year the students from universities also became integrated in the association (BundesSchüler-und StudierendenVertretung).

Special fields

Several special fields are receiving a broader interest in DVE today:

- The issue of chronic pain has attracted interest in medicine and health professions.
- In the field of primary prevention and health promotion, OT offers concepts and a wide range of services for people of every age. In Germany politics, medicine and health professions differ between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. Earlier OT only worked in secondary and tertiary prevention that means with clients who have diseases. Primary prevention is still not paid by health insurances. Thus organisations, companies, and individuals have to pay for services of primary prevention. But the demand for these services is increasing.
- Community-based rehabilitation in Germany's medical and social system is much discussed among colleagues. Models of CBR are tested.
- Following the UN-Convention of the Rights for People with Disability the inclusion of children with disabilities in primary and secondary schools is implemented. But integration of OT is yet to come.

Herta Dangl
WFOT Delegate, Germany

HONG KONG

Hong Kong Occupational Therapy Association has celebrated her 35th Anniversary starting from November 2013. The celebration was kicked off by a banquet which gathered over 400 local OTs from different years of graduation from the local Education Programme, as well as distinguished guests. We had a very good reunion, meeting old friends, taking photos for graduates from each year, story-telling of OT milestones in Hong Kong, interviewing "old" OTs to share with us about critical moments and interesting stories about OT. Of course, we also made use of the occasion to express our thanks to our close collaborators who offer to us unfailing support over the years. Apart from the banquet, we also held a photo contest to snapshot precious OT moments. We want to advocate the awareness of OT practice for the practicality and extensiveness of service. Furthermore, we have a series of HKOTA 35th Anniversary Seminar. We invited OTs from different

specialties that contributed significantly to the profession to share with us the fruit of their work.. By discussion through the seminar, the professional knowledge will be further disseminated and enriched.

Through a series of activities, we aim not only to promote OT among professional members, but also to the public. In the recent three years, we have put great effort into promoting the World OT Day and have provided major exhibitions in public areas. We continue to educate the public about occupational therapy to enhance our professional image. Such exhibitions increase awareness and recognition of OT services provided through direct client treatment, consultation, advisory capacities, etc.

Manfred Fung
WFOT Delegate, Hong Kong

INDIA

OTICON'2014: AIOTA's 51st Annual National Conference of AIOTA , organized by S. V. National Institute of Rehabilitation Training & Research, took place in Olatpur, Cuttack in collaboration with Orissa Branch of AIOTA from Feb. 7-9, 2014. The theme of the conference was '**Living Life to the Fullest- The OT Perspective**'. Dr. Patricia Schaber, Associate Professor, University of Minnesota (USA) delivered the key note address.

IJOT: CNKI SCHLOR, China, OTSeeker Database (Australia) and Indian Citation Index (ICI) have selected Indian Journal of Occupational Therapy for indexing in their internationally recognized databases. The publication is already indexed in many other national and international databases including as full text database from the year 2001 at www.medind.nic.in

ADHAD DAY: AIOTA has joined hands with many other professional ADHD organizations worldwide that support the initiative, to appeal to WHO to declare an annual WORLD ADHD DAY. It has pleaded that such a declaration would increase knowledge, open discussions to address the disorder in respect to its prevention, diagnosis, intervention and treatment. *To look for AIOTA support click on the link <http://www.adhd-day.com/es/tdah/> and down the page you will see "ADHERIDOS".*

New OT College: AIOTA has granted accreditation with effect from July 2013 to BOT program, commencing at Smt. Kamlaben P. Patel institute of Physiotherapy & Occupational Therapy, Anand, Gujarat. The information to this effect has been sent to WFOT.

TENURE OF EC: The General Body of AIOTA which met in Feb. 2013 at Trivandrum resolved to extend tenure of Executive Committee (EC) to four years in place of earlier two years. Accordingly the present EC will now continue working till 31st March 2016.

AWARDED: During OTICON'2013 the Golden Jubilee Conference of AIOTA at Trivandrum Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala Sri Oommen Chandy presented the inaugural awards: '*President AIOTA's Crown of OT Award*' to Dr. R.K. Sharma (New Delhi) & Dr. Mrs. Zarine D. Ferzandi (Mumbai) in recognition of their outstanding contribution & dedication to AIOTA and '*Life Time Achievement Award*' to Dr B.D. Dasari (U.K.) & Dr Veena Slaich (New Delhi), in recognition of an outstanding lifetime contribution & dedication to OT. Dr Jyothika Bijlani (Mumbai), Dr Shashi Oberai (Navi Mumbai) and Dr Shovan Saha (Manipal) were also felicitated with the prestigious '*Professional Excellence Award*' of AIOTA.

Dr Anil K Srivastava
President AIOTA
WFOT Delegate India

Sababa Children's camp for burn-scarred children in the Middle East

Five years ago, the occupational therapy department together with the physiotherapy department at Schneider Children's Medical Center in Israel embarked on a new kind of camp in the Holy Land, to help children recover from their burn injuries and emotional scars. Alternating between the shores of the Sea of Galilee at Kibbutz Haon and Kibbutz Eilat, Sababa Burn Camp has become an experience that changes the lives of its children, who, in the company of other survivors, find acceptance and healing. Our goal is to create a warm environment for children with burns who struggle to overcome the isolation and depression that come with their injuries, and to help them build self-confidence and friendships that will last a lifetime.

Together with a staff of over 40 therapists, social workers and volunteers from the burn units of Israel's leading hospitals, we provide the children with unique activities that encourage them to try something new. For instance the "Drum Circle" is a gathering of all the campers and staff led by renowned percussionist Gilad Dobrecky. The drum circle is an opportunity for the campers to learn how to play many different and unusual types of percussion instruments. Even children whose hands were severely damaged were included in this activity with the use of improvised and adaptive instruments. As they drummed, their sense of connection and community continued to grow. At a Sababa drum circle, occupational therapists harness the healing powers of music, the universal language.



The activities OTs offer the children such as outdoor adventures and ropes courses are not only fun and exciting; they are rewarding and teach the children to trust each other and trust themselves. The courage these children encompass touches the heart of every fireman, surgeon, therapist, and volunteer who has helped save the lives of these burned children.

Throughout the years the dynamic thinking of our staff made some wonderful changes, including our name change from "Israel Burn Camp for Children" to "Sababa", (which means cool or groovy in both Hebrew and Arabic), an exchange program that brought children to Israel from the west bank, and a new commitment to work with the campers throughout the year. When we started the camp five years ago, we were not sure a camp that served Jews, Christians, and Muslims would be accepted in the Middle East. It is now clear that our multicultural and multilingual approach yields astonishing results, friendships, and happiness, as part of the survivors' journey to reintegration. The children who have had the opportunity to experience all that at Sababa are able to join free of charge including medical care and transportation expenses thanks to generous contributions. These children cannot wait to come back year after year, and many more wish to join in.



Ruty Sagiv
WFOT Delegate, Israel

MALTA

The Malta Association of Occupational Therapists (MAOT) had an eventful year. The main event was held in October when the 1st General Assembly of Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries (COTEC) was held at St Paul's Bay, Malta. During this event we had the opportunity to promote the occupational therapy profession in Malta and in Europe, whereby COTEC Executive Committee, Ms Samantha Shann, WFOT Vice President Finance, and MAOT committee members met with His Excellency, the President of Malta Dr. George Abela. During this meeting issues such as social poverty and eating disorders were discussed. Occupational therapy work both in Malta and abroad were highlighted. During this event we also met with local Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Ms Claudette Abela Baldacchino, the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity, Dr Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, as well as with Ms Helga Ellul from the Nationalist Party. On this occasion, a Maltese night and a tour to the silent city at Mdina were held, whilst the new MAOT website was launched – www.maotwebsite.com. The 1st COTEC tree was also planted in Qrendi. Maria Daniela Farrugia Vice-President of the MAOT was elected as a member of the COTEC Executive. Photos of this event can be found on the Malta Association of Occupational Therapists facebook page.

In September, a new MAOT committee was elected for the coming two years. The main focus of this committee is to implement ways for improvement of the association and join in the Malta Federation of Professional Association (MFPA). This should help us to have an official meeting place, be represented in the MFPA executive committee and ensure collaboration with other professionals. We are also working on a business plan and to raise the profile of the association.

The MAOT continued to organise several CPD sessions for staff and students. The main CPD held were ADOS training in collaboration with speech therapists, conference about stress management, and conference about the psychological impact of hand injuries. The MAOT also holds a monthly talk on a community radio programme aimed at educating listeners and promoting the profession.

Demis Cachia
President of MAOT
WFOT Delegate Malta

NETHERLANDS

Dutch Stephanie Saenger, President of COTEC

At the October meeting in Malta, the first, newly structured General Assembly of COTEC elected its new Executive Committee:

President: Stephanie Saenger (Netherlands)
Vice President: Anne Lawson-Porter (United Kingdom)
VP Administration: Anu Söderström (Finland)
VP Finance: Renée Oltman (Germany)
Members: Maria Daniëla Farrugia (Malta) and Helena Cronebäck (Sweden)

Stephanie Sanger was elected president of COTEC. Stephanie has been actively involved in the work of the national association since her graduation in 1978. She was a board member of the Dutch association for many years and representative in many (governmental) committees. Since 2000 she was delegate of the Netherlands to COTEC and since 2008 the COTEC-ENOTHE link and member of the board of both organisations.

The new executive looks forward to developing a good team approach and working towards the achievement of the COTEC Action Plan for 2013-2014. They will work towards an increased visibility of occupational therapy in the EU arena.

New Dutch board member in ENOTHE

At the General Assembly during the Annual Meeting of ENOTHE in York (UK) Marie-Antoinette van Kuyk-Minis (HAN University, Nijmegen) was elected in the board of ENOTHE.

Marie Antoinette Kuyk – Minis defended her PhD successfully on October 2013, with the topic: Sustainability of Work for Persons with Neuromuscular Diseases.

The second edition of the Dutch Professional Competencies of Occupational Therapy, edited by Joan Verhoeff (University Rotterdam) and Annerie Zalmstra (University Zuyd Heerlen) was published. One of the twelve described competencies in this new booklet is **collaborate**. The Annual Dutch OT congress, November 2013, took specifically this competence, collaborate, to reinforce as the main topic for their yearly congress.

Mieke le Granse
WFOT Delegate Netherlands

ROMANIA

Celebrating the Occupational Therapy profession in Romania

In terms of promoting the occupational therapy profession within the the current Romanian public and academic spaces, the year 2013 is distinguished by the followings:

1. Establishing a contact with the *Working Group for the implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC* regarding the legal process of regulation of the occupational therapy profession in Romania;
2. Establishing a collaboration with universities providing occupational therapy educational program;
3. Establishing a professional network with worldwide occupational therapists volunteering and / or working for years in Romania.

Therefore, the activities are organised around:

- The policy procedure for Honorary Membership, adopted on February 2013;
- The “Protocol of Cooperation”, completed on April 2013 with the University “Vasile Alecsandri” from Bacău, Faculty of Science of the Movement, Sport and Health, Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Department;
- The policy procedure for „Temporary time specific membership” for those Occupational Therapists who intend to carry on a professional activity in Romania, adopted on July 2013;
- Drafting the text of the law “on the organisation and exercise of the profession of occupational therapist in Romania” – a work in progress;
- Up-dating the Association webpage.

As a result:

- Hanneke van Bruggen (*coordinator of a Teacher Training project in Occupational Therapy for Romanian lecturers*), Sharon A. Cermak (*Professor of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy, University of Southern California*) Mary-Margaret Windsor (*ScD, OTR/L, humanitarian worker*), Dr. Renne Mcdannel (*Occupational Scientist & Therapist, CEO Broken Heart Ministries Foundation*) and Paul Himschoot (*Occupational Therapist and Quality manager at PHL – university college*) were awarded the PAOTR Honorary Membership for their special contribution to OT professional development in Romania.
- Two OT students from Bacău University “Vasile Alecsandri” were nominated for their participation to the *19th Annual Meeting of ENOTHE* in York, UK.
- Another OT student and a staff member from University „1 Decembrie 1918” Alba-Iulia (RO) increased the number of the PAOTR members.

- Association members were invited either as experts or consultants or assistant instructor to bring their contribution in the context of community projects in Bucharest, Oradea and Varna (BG).
- The WFOT Bulletin, vol.67, May 2013 published an article written by one of the members.

Mirela-Carmen Burlău
WFOT Delegate Romania

SWEDEN

On 17 October, our national OT day was held. Different kinds of activities around Sweden were arranged on the theme: "Equal Opportunities - Occupational Therapy". It had been promoted throughout October.

In November 2012 our Association General Assembly adopted a revised Code of Ethics. This has now been translated into English and is available for download (PDF) at our website <http://www.fsa.se/Om-forbundet/Other-languages/English/>

The Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists has had three abstracts accepted for the WFOT2014 Congress in Japan. We are very much looking forward to present our latest findings on "OT and Sustainable Development", "The organization that formed a profession? - the establishment of occupational therapy in Sweden", "Preventing disease by improving lifestyle habits - an example of an occupational therapy approach to a national strategy".

Ida Kåhlin
WFOT Delegate Sweden

TAIWAN

Taiwan Occupational Therapy Association (TOTA) held their annual conference on November 3, 2013 in Taipei. TOTA members voted to re-elect members of the Board of Directors. A competition on assistive devices, photos and short films (with theme of occupational therapists in Taiwan) was held during the conference. The workshop and forum of Occupational Science was held before the conference.

In 2013, TOTA collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Welfare to hold three professional certificate programs: Occupational Therapy in Oncology and Palliative Care; Occupational Therapy in Long Term Care; and Occupational Therapy Clinical Teacher. Hundreds of occupational therapists have become certified in different fields after training.

In response to the 2014 WFOT Congress in Yokohama, Japan, the numbers of paper submission and acceptance from Taiwanese occupational therapists have increased greatly. It can be expected that the number of Taiwanese occupational therapists to attend the 2014 WFOT Congress will be much higher than in the past.

Athena Tsai
WFOT Delegate Taiwan

UNITED KINGDOM

It has been another exciting and full year at the British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT) and for occupational therapy in the UK.

The annual conference was again held in Glasgow in June, 2013 and was another successful and vibrant event which highlighted and celebrated the innovative, rewarding and diverse work of occupational therapists around the UK and beyond. The international session was a very well attended session focusing on 'Disaster and Development-an Occupational Perspective: the role for occupational therapists in disaster situations'. The four speakers, Samantha Shann (WFOT Vice President Finance), Dorothy Boggs (Knowledge management Unit, Handicap International) Sarah Sheldon (Program co-ordinator, Motivation) and Gaye Jackson (Head of continuing development and education partnership NHS Northwest) gave an enlightening and insightful overview of the effects of disaster on people and countries and the incredible work of OT's and other professionals working in these challenging circumstances.

The 38th Annual COT Conference will be held at the Brighton Centre in Brighton on 3rd - 5th June 2014 – we look forward to seeing some of you there <http://cotannualconference.org.uk>

The United Kingdom Occupational Therapy Research Foundation (UKOTRF) has funded 3 research projects this year and continues to look for members to support in their research careers.

The British Journal of Occupational Therapy (BJOT) was delighted to receive its first impact factor of 1.096 in June 2013. Colleagues look forward to participating in a meeting of international OT journal editors again at the WFOT Congress 2014 to share ideas for developing and disseminating the evidence base for the profession.

The College of Occupational Therapists (COT) has published several new resources, one being, "Living well through activity in care homes: a toolkit, to support OT's and others involved with the residential care home sector" - <http://www.cot.co.uk/living-well-care-homes>. This toolkit aims to promote dignity and respect, mental and physical wellbeing and integration into the community and is an excellent resource to support best practice. They have also published two new practice guidelines over the past year: "Occupational Therapy for Adults Undergoing Total Hip Replacement"; "Occupational therapists' Use of Occupation Focused Practice in Secure Hospitals". They can be downloaded from www.baot.org.uk. The COT process for producing them has now been accredited by NICE (the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence).

Over the last year, the collaboration between BAOT and Boots UK, the leading and most trusted pharmacy chain in the UK, has been a huge success. Boots UK are now doing an 'Active and Independent' range of equipment for daily living available at 390 of their stores across the UK and by mail order, 11 of which have been approved by BAOT. Recently a number of OT's spent a day in a Boots store giving advice to customers on the products and information about occupational therapy. This pilot project is expected to roll out to other stores across the country in due course.

A reception was held at BAOT/COT headquarters to acknowledge and honour the winners of the 2013 annual awards for Education, Research and Continuing Professional Development and the UK Occupational Therapy Research Foundation (UKOTRF) grants. Four OT's Helen Gabriel, Deborah Hearle, Theresa Hopwood and Jane Wood also received merit awards.

Continuing financial pressures across the UK remain cause for concern with ongoing budget cuts in many sectors. BAOT continues to work closely with UNISON in their negotiations to support the interests of its members and their service users as new workplace agreements are discussed.

A number of scandals related to poor standards of care for patients and residents in England have lead to some major reports (e.g. Francis, Keogh) which has involved the organisation in active discussions on professionalism with members and colleagues from other professions.

The BAOT/COT Strategic Intentions for 2013-2014 were launched by HRH the Princess Royal COT Patron in 2013 with numerous road shows conducted with members to inform of the plan.

Camilla Cox
WFOT Delegate UK

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Growing interest in OT international connections is occurring at multiple levels in the USA. The number of WFOT members in the USA has increased by 10% in the past year. The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) has established an ad hoc committee of the Board to articulate a cohesive international strategy to meet the Centennial Vision goal of OT being globally connected. International topics are increasingly highlighted at AOTA Conferences. The upcoming Annual Conference in Baltimore, April 3-6, 2014 will feature Gelya Frank, PhD, Anthropologist and Occupational Scientist who will explore issues in international practice important to international fieldwork in OT.

Healthcare reform has drawn AOTA into intensive advocacy work to position OT as an essential health benefit in habilitation and rehabilitation. A key focus of AOTA is to expand OT in primary care under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). Health reform legislation, including PPACA, also seeks to bring parity of mental health with physical health coverage, and thus is an opportunity to include and expand OT services in mental health in the USA.

AOTA's Evidence-Based Practice initiative continues to generate resources to support OT services. The latest projects offer systematic reviews of intervention effectiveness for neurodegenerative conditions such as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Multiple Sclerosis, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's Disease. In addition, a systematic review of OT in Mental Health services for Children and Youth was published in November/December 2013. These reviews are intended to build science behind practice and identify areas in need of research. Materials are available on www.aota.org and in the American Journal of Occupational Therapy <http://ajot.aotapress.net/>.

Susan Coppola
WFOT Delegate USA

VENEZUELA

The 10th Congress of the Latin American Confederation of Occupational Therapists (CLATO) and the 5th Venezuelan Congress of OT were held in Caracas, Venezuela, from October 30th to November 1st, 2013. We were honoured by the presence of Professor Sue Baptiste, Vice President WFOT.

There were pre-Congress activities, which included meetings of the CLATO Executive, the celebration of World OT Day with a concert of Latin American music, and workshops at the Congress see, Hotel Tamanaco in Caracas.

On October 28th the 7th Encounter of Latin American Schools of OT was held at the auditorium of the Deanship of Medicine at Central University of Venezuela. The theme was "Research: A Strategy for the Construction of Knowledge for Academic Education in Occupational Therapy".

A meeting of CLATO Executives and Delegates with Professor Sue Baptiste took place on October 29th. This provided an opportunity to establish closer ties between CLATO and WFOT.

The Congresses' Opening Ceremony was held on October 30th. The theme of the Congress was: "Occupational Therapy Practices: Latin America Builds and Integrates Knowledge". The Congresses' official language was Spanish. 729 persons registered. A good number of papers and posters from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela were presented; also a few from USA and Sweden.

Professor Baptiste presented her Keynote: "Growing our Capacity: Occupational Therapy Around the Globe" on October 31st. There was much expectation to hear her and the Keynote will be published in the Journal of the School of Public Health, Central University of Venezuela, with authorization from Professor Baptiste. It is also being translated into Portuguese for Brazilian OTs and students.

During the Closing Ceremony on Friday November 1st, Costa Rica was announced as the country where the 11th CLATO Congress will be held in two years'time. Diplomas were awarded each day of the Congress for best paper and best poster presented.

Carmen Forn de Zita
WFOT Delegate Venezuela