

## **NEWS FROM MEMBER ORGANISATIONS**

**JUNE 2015**

### **AUSTRIA**

As I was newly elected as Austria's Delegate to the WFOT, I would like to use this Newsletter as an opportunity to introduce myself and my new position within the Austria's national association, Ergotherapie Austria.

When I was still a student at the University of Applied Sciences in Wiener Neustadt, Austria (2006-2009) I started being interested in the WFOT after I attended a presentation by former WFOT Delegate Maria Feiler. As she was and is a role model for me, I sent her an E-mail, asking what I should do if I wanted to work in a field similar to her's one day. She said that I should start working within Austria's national association to get to know more about politics and also to work in the field with clients to gain experience as an occupational therapist.

I followed her advice, so the last years I finished my Master's degree and have been working as a self-employed occupational therapist and as a board member within Austria's association, responsible for public relations. In 2009/2010 I also spent a year in New Zealand where I had the chance to get an insight into the work of New Zealand's association (NZAOT) which enforced my interest in worldwide occupational therapy.

I am happy that the board decided to create a new position within the Austrian association so that now I am not only Austria's delegate to the WFOT but also co-opted board member for international affairs. The combination of these positions makes the communication concerning international topics more efficient. I am really looking forward to fulfilling my new tasks together with Austria's second Delegate Melanie Kriegseisen-Peruzzi and hope that we are going to have the same role model function for occupational therapists and students as Maria Feiler had for me.

*Yara Peterko, Delegate Austria*

### **BANGLADESH**

Rabeya Ferdous, Clinical Occupational Therapist from Dhaka, Bangladesh has had two articles published in newspapers in Bangladesh.

"Living with autism and occupational therapy" was published in the Independent newspaper, and is available at:

[http://www.theindependentbd.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=253789%3ALiving-with-autism-and-occupational-therapy&catid=176%3Astethoscope&Itemid=214](http://www.theindependentbd.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=253789%3ALiving-with-autism-and-occupational-therapy&catid=176%3Astethoscope&Itemid=214)

"Occupational Therapy to Manage Autism" was published in the Daily Star Newspaper and is available at: <http://www.thedailystar.net/health/occupational-therapy-manage-autism-75582>

## CARIBBEAN

The Association of Caribbean Occupational Therapists (ACOT) was formed in 1991 to encourage the development of the profession of occupational therapy in the Caribbean region. ACOT's membership currently includes occupational therapists working in the following Caribbean islands: Barbados, Cayman Islands, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. There are also a number of associate members within the region and extra regionally from the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom.

ACOT became a contributing member of the World Federation (WFOT) in 1994. The Trinidad and Tobago Occupational Therapy Association became an associate member of WFOT in 2012. Since 1991, ACOT has hosted 11 scientific conferences biennially. The upcoming conference for 2015 will be held in Trinidad and Tobago between 29-31 October. The theme this year is "Moving Forward in Health and Education".

The conference theme this year has been chosen in anticipation of the first Master's degree programme in occupational therapy being developed at the University of the Southern Caribbean in Trinidad and Tobago. It is a very exciting time in the region and we expect the conference to reflect the vibrancy and development of the profession in the region. The Conference Planning committee promises both a wide range of oral presentations, workshops and poster presentations as well as exciting opportunities for professional networking. In true Caribbean style there will also be fun-filled social activities planned for all to enjoy including a very special gala open to all registered attendees.

Registration and more information about the conference and accommodation can be found on the ACOT website: [www.caribbeanot.com](http://www.caribbeanot.com). Queries can be directed to the conference information email: [acotconferencett@gmail.com](mailto:acotconferencett@gmail.com). This website also includes information of the other Caribbean nations. We look forward to welcoming you to the warmth and vitality of the Caribbean. See you in October!

*Lesley Garcia, Delegate ACOT*

## GERMANY

### **Meeting with Ministry of Health**

In 2014, the German Association (DVE) was invited by Mr Suhr and Ms Becker from the Ministry of Health. They used the opportunity to discuss issues like DQR (German Qualification Frame for education) and the academic education of occupational therapists. The ministry could not give an explicit statement for the future but offered continuing discussion in the following years.

### **Health professions get more attention**

More publications on the subject *health professions* (e.g. from Robert Bosch Foundation and Federal Ministry of Education and Research) reveal an increase of interest which is motivated by the growing health service branch and the political relevance in the job market. The political focus on education in the health professions indicates deficits in regulations and require updating and developing these professions. Another paper of the Federal Institute of Vocational Education (BIBB) describes a decrease of OT students which DVE already identified in the outcome of the OT school survey in 2012.

### **New health laws in progress**

The government is working on three new health laws: e-Health law, law of health care and prevention and a law for a broader provision of health service. All laws affect the fields of the health professions like OT, PT and speech therapy. Thus, DVE is in contact with the Ministry of Health and presents its statements when possible.

*Herta Dangl, Delegate Germany*

## MALAWI



### **Barriers and Challenges faced by the Occupational Therapy Association of Malawi.**

The Occupational Therapy Association of Malawi (OTAM) is working towards a five year plan of opening an Occupational Therapy program at the College of Medicine in Blantyre, Malawi.

Malawi has a growing total population of approximately 15,380,000 (World Bank 2011), 80% of whom live in rural areas (World Bank 2010). According to the UNDP human development index, Malawi ranks 171st out of 187 countries (UNDP 2011), a lower-economically developed country with a GDP per capita of US\$ 371 (World Bank 2011). In 2003 the Disability Living Survey estimated that 480,000 people in Malawi (4.18% of population) were living with disability compared to 190,000 people in 1983 of whom 45% were aged 15-45 years old. (Lang 2008).

OTAM face many barriers in the development of an Occupational Therapy training course. The most significant of these is human resource. In terms of the current status of human resources, Malawi is greatly limited. For decades, rehabilitation services in Malawi have been neglected. Trained OTs at bachelor degree level are urgently required both to provide services and to oversee the quality of rehabilitation services in the country. OT in Malawi began in the 1960s by expatriates at Zomba Mental Hospital, followed by the first Malawian OT graduate in 1982. In 2009, a small group took the initiative to host the biennial OT African Regional Group Congress (OTARG), to begin work to support the development of an OT education programme, and to form the Occupational Therapy Association of Malawi (OTAM) that successfully gained national accreditation in 2013. In 2011, approximately 15 OTs (half Malawian) were practicing in-country, only two of whom were employed by the Ministry of Health (MoH). In 2015, ten OTs have been accounted for: seven of whom are Malawian, three of whom are expatriates.

The 10 currently functioning Occupational Therapists are partnering with Rehabilitation Technicians (trained through the College of Medicine in Blantyre, Malawi) to seek further study opportunities in the field of Occupational Therapy. OTAM is also regularly meeting towards the goals of building International partnerships and innovating strategies for building awareness of Occupational Therapy among the population of Malawi as well as the Government and Health Services.

*Kate Loveday, OTAM Secretary*

## References:

- Lang, R. (2008) Disability Policy Audit in Namibia, Swaziland, Malawi and Mozambique: Final Report, Southern African Federation of the Disabled, Bulawayo.
- World Bank (2011) World Bank Data: Malawi [Online], Available from: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/malawi>

## **NIGERIA**

The Nigeria Association of Occupational Therapists (NAOT) is targeting the training, partnering and advocacy for Occupational Therapy in the National level. We are presently liaising with two Universities to start up the training of Occupational Therapists, to add up to the only degree awarding program in Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile- Ife, Osun State, Nigeria, plans are ongoing to also have the OT program WOFT accredited.

A favourable partnership has been achieved with the Medical Rehabilitation Therapist (Registration) Board of Nigeria (which is the regulatory council for Occupational therapy profession) primarily to unanimously ensure best practice in Occupational Therapy.

We have successfully integrated into other Health unions and Associations that will proffer opportunity for active participation in health policy planning in the Country. A new OT scheme of service is also being introduced to the public service commission for a uniform job placement across the country. Part of our immediate goal is to co-opt OT and OTA students at different levels into NAOT.

*Victoria Amu, President and Delegate Nigeria*

## **ROMANIA**

### **Brief history of the year 2014 and information on an important event in 2015**

During the year 2014 the Professional Association of Occupational Therapists from Romania made significant progress in communicating with the international profile of the profession by attending the Council Meeting and 16th WFOT Congress in Japan as well as with the national providers of academic education in occupational therapy in Bucharest, 9 December 2014.

Both meetings highlighted the professional issues on what we have to take responsibility as we continue to move through the early stages of development: professional autonomy, ensuring competencies, and promoting Occupational Therapy as a Healthcare profession all in current alignment with the global development of the profession.

Initiatives occurred during the year 2014:

1. Poster presentation at the WFOT Congress.
2. Collaboration with the University "Vasile Alecsandri" from Bacău
3. Roundtable PAOTR–Universities–Project's Managers in implementing OT education in Romania
4. Continue working with own local communities & organizations.
5. Updating website [www.terapieocupational.ro](http://www.terapieocupational.ro) and launch the facebook page (Professional OT Association from RO - Asociatia Profesionala a TO din RO)

In February 2015 a two weeks training course for students and graduates was organized at the University "Vasile Alecsandri" from Bacău.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY THEORY AND PRACTICE  
Mary-Margaret Windsor, ScD, OTR/L, and  
Isabelle Beaudry-Bellefeuille, MScOT, OT(C).

*Mirela Burlau, Delegate Romania*

## SWEDEN

### **Arbetsterapiforum**

Occupational Therapy Forum, the conference of the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists takes place every other year. This year in the middle of April in Gothenburg. Almost one thousand occupational therapists have registered to the conference, which last for two days. Also occupational therapy students will participate in the conference. One hundred and seventy abstracts have been submitted in total. Four inspired lectures, a new event at the conference, are given by for example Professor Helene Polatajko and jurisconsult Dina Jacobson. On the second day of the conference occupational therapists in the “Specialist Training in Clinical Competence” programme present their completed papers.

*Ulrika Larsson, Secretary, FSA*

## SWITZERLAND

The annual three-country-meeting between Germany, Austria and Switzerland was held from 3-4 November 2014 in Bern. Subjects as occupational therapy in the field of health promotion or the accreditation of foreign certificates were discussed.

“To be – To belong to – To become” will be the topic of the 4<sup>th</sup> Swiss convention of occupational therapy from the 12-13 June 2015 in Bern.

The Swiss association of occupational therapists (EVS/ASE) meets the three Swiss universities of applied science on a regular basis. Among subjects to be discussed are advanced training and public relations. In 2015, the potential of occupational interventions will be highlighted on the basis of dementia. From the focal point of the year, the slogan “if forgetfulness becomes a challenge” has been derived to be employed both in the field of education and all further activities of the EVS/ASE.

The managing board of the EVS/ASE has composed its portfolios afresh. Occupational development has been introduced as a new portfolio, which among others deals with the topic “Health 2020”.

The EVS/ASE together with the association of health care professionals conduct collective negotiations. Despite the continuous inflation, the tariff units for occupational therapy service have never been adjusted within the last 20 years. This fact has forced many occupational therapists to close down their own business. Since in the future occupational therapy will enhance its focus on people's participation in real daily living, the core business will become the out-patient-service in the patient's own environment. Therefore, it will be crucial to negotiate the in- and out-patient-service to be paid equally for, to avoid future financial pressure on occupational therapists.

*Urs Mueller, Delegate Switzerland*

## TAIWAN

### International Occupational Therapy Exchange in Taiwan

In 2015, occupational therapy educators and practitioners in Taiwan have continued their efforts in engaging in international exchanges with occupational therapists across the globe, including:

1. Taiwan Occupational Therapy Association will host an international conference from 12-13 December 2015. We invite occupational therapists and researchers to report on research findings, case studies, unique practice experiences, professional innovation and issues related to Occupational Therapy. Please contact [otaroc@ms13.hinet.net](mailto:otaroc@ms13.hinet.net) for further details.
2. Professor Maud Graff from Netherlands, a leading expert and author of many papers on home-based occupational therapy for people with dementia and their caregivers, will present a workshop on occupational therapy in dementia care in October 2015.
3. Taiwan Occupational Therapy Association is proud to be the largest international group (about 30) occupational therapists who attended our neighbour's 2015 International Occupational Therapy Conference in Shenzhen, China. We appreciated the hospitality by our gracious hosts, Chinese Association of Rehabilitation Medicine and Hong Kong Institute of Occupational Therapy, and enjoyed the opportunities for networking and sharing experiences. We look forward to more future exchanges.
4. International activities of Occupational Therapy Programme at National Taiwan University (NTUOT): (a) the Programme hosted an international symposium to welcome visiting faculties from the Department of Occupational Therapy at Gunma University in Japan (b) Prof. Jin-Shei Lai at Northwestern University and Prof. David Strauser at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign also visited NTUOT and gave speeches (c) Student exchange programme with JAMK University in Finland is ongoing since 2012.
5. The Occupational Therapy Programme in Kaohsiung Medical University has two overseas study programmes: junior students to Ibaraki Prefectural University of Health Sciences, Japan and sophomore students to Monash University in Australia.

*Ling-Hui Chang, Delegate Taiwan*

### TTOTA Celebrates its Tenth Year Anniversary.

This update brings warm greetings from the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Occupational Therapy Association (TTOTA). The mission of the association is to support member practitioners, represent their interests and those of their service users by influencing national policy, developing the workforce, leading innovation in occupational therapy practice and research, and promoting the importance of occupation as a route to and outcome of health and wellbeing.

Since the establishment of the association in 2004 we have made progress towards our mission and also progress in the manner in which we set out to achieve our goals. We continue to work hard 1. to raise public awareness and understanding of occupational therapy, 2. to advocate for the development of the occupational therapy work force and 3. to provide a bursary for final year students of occupational therapy. We have received financial and advocacy support from members of Team HOPE (How Ordinary People do Extraordinary things) which is the fundraising and advocacy arm of TTOTA. In 2011, 2013 and 2014 TTOTA ran an innovative community-based, advocacy and triathlon-training programme that has helped the association raise the funds necessary to do its work. And here are the activities we are celebrating in this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

#### Bursary Award

Two occupational therapy students have been awarded the bursary. One was awarded TT\$5,000.00 in 2012 and one was awarded TT\$10,000.00 in 2014. We hope to award another top student later in 2015.

#### New Promotion Kits

TTOTA has completely revamped and upgraded its promotional materials including logo, display panels, informative brochures, banners, and promotional items. The new materials allow the members of TTOTA to promote the profession at public and professional venues. We have maintained our website ([www.ttota.com](http://www.ttota.com)) and Facebook pages in which you may find the latest news and activities of the association.



**Public Education Mall Days**

TTOTA has committed to using the new display booths and promotional materials at local malls around the country every quarter in 2015. So far we have reached the public at two popular malls educating a wide a cross section of weekend mall goers.

#### Stakeholders' Brunch Meeting

In October 2014 TTOTA hosted stakeholders from the education, government, public and private health sectors to inform them about the urgent need to develop the workforce in occupational therapy. We

demonstrated the importance of occupational therapy through simulations of disabilities and successfully invited collaboration from the stakeholders.

### **TTOTA and The University of the Southern Caribbean co-hosted a symposium called “A PROFESSIONAL EVENING: Moving Forward in health and Education” (20 April 2015)**

After many years of advocating for an education programme we announced the upcoming Master’s degree programme in Occupational Therapy at the University of the Southern Caribbean. This programme will be the first Masters in Occupational Therapy to be offered in the Caribbean region. At the “Professional Evening” we informed our colleagues and prospective students about the value of occupational therapy and the educational path to becoming a practitioner.

### **Association of Caribbean Occupational Therapists Conference (29-31 October 2015)**

At the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference in the Cayman Islands in 2013, TTOTA was selected to host the 12<sup>th</sup> Biennial Scientific Conference of the Association of Caribbean Occupational Therapists. The theme this year is aptly “Moving Forward in Health and Education”. More information on the conference is available at [www.caribbeanot.com](http://www.caribbeanot.com)

Association of Caribbean Occupational Therapists  
12th Biennial Scientific Conference

**Moving Forward  
In Health And  
Education**

- International presenters
- Continuing Education
- Great networking
- Professional Development

OCTOBER 29TH - 31ST 2015

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO,  
WEST INDIES

For more information:  
Association of Caribbean Occupational Therapists  
[www.caribbeanot.com](http://www.caribbeanot.com)  
E-mail: [acotconferencett@gmail.com](mailto:acotconferencett@gmail.com)

Most importantly in practical terms, we have already seen the growth of the workforce in increased numbers of occupational therapists working in the country. We now number 14 in the association, up from 9 in 2011. We still have a long way to go as we estimate 250 occupational therapists are required to meet the needs of the 195,000 people living with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago!



As you can see, we have been very busy working on our vision of occupational therapy being available for all citizens and full inclusion for all regardless of abilities. We would like to acknowledge the past contributions of many corporate and private citizens in our community as well as our colleagues around the world who have supported our progress thus far. We thank them and trust that they will continue to support TTOTA in its efforts to improve the lives of those with special needs through occupational therapy.

Lesley Garcia, Delegate TTOTA

## UGANDA

All the occupational therapists in the world and promoters of occupational therapy programs across all networks need to know that there will be one of the biggest International Congress of the Occupational Therapy Africa Regional Group (OTARG) in Uganda. The Congress will start on the 7<sup>th</sup> and end on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015. Preparations for the Congress have been finalised and registration is going on for everyone who want to come and experience the Pearl of Africa – Uganda. The theme “transforming health care in Africa through the use of occupation” was strategically selected to truly reflect the innovations that African occupational therapists have championed through the work they do. The world must know what roles occupational therapists have played and continue to play in transforming health care in Africa. Everyone who is part of the occupational therapy family in the world needs to challenge self; “this is a congress never to miss!”



### **Why was Uganda chosen to host the 9<sup>th</sup> OTARG Congress?**

Uganda won the bid to host the 9<sup>th</sup> OTARG Congress that shall take place from 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015 because delegates at the 8<sup>th</sup> OTARG Congress needed to experience the Pearl of Africa in order to know how the climate looks like, learn about the rare species of wild life the world has ever seen such as; Uganda cob, Rhinos, laughing baboons etc: to witness the source of the Nile that brings life in Egypt; experience a country rich with a diversity of tribes, cultures and rich in traditional foods as well to interact with great innovators in occupational therapy within Uganda who deserve international awards as “health transformers through occupation”. I believe that this shall be the highest attended

congress in the history of OTARG and pledge that you will have great stories to share at the WFOT Congress in South Africa in 2018.

Thank you to those who have already registered for the Congress. For others who have not yet registered, please do so. To register or make a donation in support of this Congress, please go to the OTARG website: [www.otarg.org.za](http://www.otarg.org.za) or you can contact any of the following by mail: Ekwan Francis Uzu (UAOT President): [ekwanfr@yahoo.com](mailto:ekwanfr@yahoo.com) or Sarah Matovu (OTARG President): [saranatty@yahoo.com](mailto:saranatty@yahoo.com)

We shall be highly honoured to receive you all in Uganda for the 9<sup>th</sup> OTARG Congress.

*Ekwan Francis Uzu, UAOT President/9<sup>th</sup> OTARG Congress Chairperson*

## UNITED KINGDOM

### **British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT)/College of Occupational Therapists (COT)**

So 2015 has begun and it is transitional times in the United Kingdom (UK) as the future of the National Health Service (NHS) and health and social care services are at the forefront of debates and discussion in the run up to our general election in May 2015. Privatisation of care services, restructuring of the system and best ways forward is on everyone's agenda. What is clear is that spending cuts are an inevitable with government austerity continuing to have an impact on the service provision – so how are we going to work differently and continue to grow as key members of health care teams is always on our minds. What does this mean for Occupational Therapists (OT) in the UK? Largely it means that the majority (80% approximately) continue to work in the NHS but increasingly it means OT's are seeking employment in different sectors and organisations. Independent practice is our fastest growing specialist section within the college and new graduates are also starting their careers as independent practitioners – this is quite radical from the more traditional career paths of OT's in the not so distant past. We watch this space for what elections will decide but never pause in our work at the association to expand the horizons of our profession.

The College continued to be politically active in the last year, with Julia Scott, COT Chief Executive, Karin Bishop, COT Head of professional practice and Sara Petela COT Public affairs officer meeting with Emmi Poteliakhoff, a senior advisor to Prime Minister David Cameron at Number 10 Downing Street. The purpose was to raise the profile of occupational therapy in health and social care and highlighting the scope of practice and added value in the future services. Members were on the picket line during strike action at the end of 2014 and further strikes were planned but suspended at the last minute due to favourable negotiations. COT has influenced many policies and legislation changes in recent months, our voice is being heard. Occupational Therapy is named in new Key Legislation coming into effect on 1 April – The Care Act 2014 and The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and replacing old legislation and marking some significant changes to process of assessment and rights for persons with disability in England and Wales.

The College of Occupational Therapists is gearing up for its 39<sup>th</sup> Annual conference and Exhibition and specialist section – work, this year in Brighton 30 June – 2 July. We welcome many influential speakers to this year's conference including: Suzanne Rastrick who is an OT by back ground and currently Chief Allied Health Professions officer for NHS England, Dr Maud Graff and Dr J Wenborn who will speak to us on the latest thinking on dementia and Ruby Wax a celebrated comedian, writer and mental health campaigner to name a few. Matters of health economics, social care and changes to legislation significant for OT will also be brought to the conference by key speakers such as: Professor John Bolton, Rachel Seabrook and Professor Ralph Fevre. We look forward to a vibrant and lively coming together of the OT community, to be able to share our practice, research and education and support one another as we and in turn our profession goes from strength to strength.

The college is also building a number of comprehensive guidelines to support practitioners in their work. Most recently this includes 'Splinting for the prevention and correction of contractures in adults with neurological dysfunction' and 'Occupational Therapy in the prevention and management of falls in adults' – these publications are free to the public and can be downloaded from [www.cot.org.uk/publications](http://www.cot.org.uk/publications).

The rise of the profile of the profession and its public awareness presents Occupational Therapy with new opportunity and this is reflected and strengthened as a national newspaper (The Guardian) produced a supplement pull out on Occupational Therapy. It highlighted the scope of the practice and

the economic value of OTs in reducing hospital admissions, reducing length of stay in hospitals and helping people live the life they want. The articles can be found at:  
<http://www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/series/guide-to-occupational-therapy>

The patron of College of Occupational Therapists, HRH The Princess Royal, most recently visited Cardiff University in Wales where they were celebrating 50 years of occupational therapy education in Wales. The event highlighted the achievements and value of the work of OTs in Wales, the UK and the wider world. The patron is a leading advocate for the profession and as part of her visit she was shown an occupational therapy children's clinic, the first of its kind in Wales.

The four countries that make up the UK have regional bodies that support OTs closer to home and are building in their capacity and value to the members they serve. In Northern Ireland this group is now forming and in Scotland a localised newsletter to members is helping raise awareness of the group and further COT support for OTs in Scotland.

So we hope to see some of you in June at our conference and please visit our website at [www.cot.org.uk](http://www.cot.org.uk) for further information and access to the many publications that can support OT practice, research and education.

*Camilla Cox, Delegate UK*