



# OTARG NEWSLETTER

(Occupational Therapy Africa Regional Group)

November 2009

No. 13



Delegates at the 6<sup>th</sup> OTASA Congress held in Mangochi in Malawi in September 2009

**Member Countries**

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

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## **EDITORIAL**

Well, what a year it has been! It is hardly believable that the OTARG Congress has come and gone.

The main purpose of this newsletter is to report on the Congress and to send out to you the minutes of the OTARG Biennial Meeting. We hope to keep you up-to-date in this way.

The 6<sup>th</sup> OTARG Congress was true to tradition, a most wonderful event, with the usual meeting of old and new friends and professional colleagues. There was much happiness and much learning.

The scientific programme was superb, the discussions lively and fruitful, deliberations with the ministers regarding training excellent, and good coverage in the press.

Malawi is truly a most wonderful and beautiful country and its people, including occupational therapists, gentle, hospitable and kind.



**The fabulous baobab trees**



**The lake and its produce**

Occupational therapy as a profession is developing fast with a number of dedicated occupational therapists at the helm. Discussions on occupational therapy training in Malawi and also Zambia were the order of the day. It is very exciting to see this development in Africa. The OTARG Congresses, of course, have a lot to do with this development.

International input as well as the development of local occupational therapy services and professionals, is one of the prime reasons for holding the biennial congresses throughout the Africa region. They have certainly born fruit from as early as 1986 in Kenya when the idea of OTARG was born.

The OTARG Biennial Meeting always takes place during the Congress. It was particularly well attended this year and you will find the details in the report below.

I hope very much to have two newsletters per year and am once again asking Member countries to save some news for me so that I may contact you mid year 2010 for news. Please reply to me! There are excellent ideas which came up at the Biennial Meeting such as reporting on interesting projects, news from students, a discussion column, useful internet sites etc.

Rozzen Botokro delegate from Togo, West Africa has kindly offered to translate our Newsletter into French and distribute it to West African countries. This is a wonderful development.

Our next OTARG Congress is to be held in Zambia in 2011. This is an event to look forward to.

**Rosemary Crouch, Editor.**

## **MORE ABOUT THE CONGRESS**

The 6<sup>th</sup> OTARG Congress was held in at the Boadzulu Resort in Mangochi, Malawi, along beautiful Lake Malawi,

about equidistant from Blantyre and Lilongwe.

The Chairperson for the Congress, a leading occupational therapist in Malawi, was Sylvester Butao. His committee consisted of:

- the secretary, Dawn Anderson,
- the treasurer Joyce Kasamba
- the ICT member, Titi Mwanjabe.

They are all occupational therapists in Malawi and did a wonderful job. The Congress was well organised and did not exceed the OTARG budget.



**Mr Sylvester Butao with Prof. Alfred Ramukumba, OTARG Chairman**

The members of the Scientific Committee from South Africa were:

- Alfred Ramukumba, University of Limpopo (MEDUNSA)
- Annah Lesunyane, University of Limpopo (MEDUNSA)
- Pat de Witt, University of Witwatersrand
- Denise Franzsen, University of Witwatersrand
- Fasloen Adams, University of Witwatersrand
- Christa Meyer, University of Limpopo (MEDUNSA)

The Scientific Programme was varied, presenting excellent research in occupational therapy, papers on OT education, new developments, new theories and existing services. The level was high and everyone learnt a great deal.

The Congress was opened by the Minister of Health in Malawi Dr Dieter Zoli. He was invited to lunch after the opening by the congress organisers, with a number of the key visitors including the President of WFOT. A very constructive discussion ensued on the development of occupational therapy training in Malawi.

The keynote speakers for the Congress were as follows:

- Mr Mussa Chiwaula, who gave the opening address on the position of disabled persons in Malawi.
- Mrs Katherine Bowler (Malawi, Children of Blessing Trust, Lilongwe), who spoke on “Working together to change lives.”
- Professor Michael Iwama (Canada, University of Toronto) who spoke on “The Kawa Model: Enabling culturally relevant occupational therapy.”
- Dr Hellen Myezwa (South Africa, University of Witwatersrand), who spoke on “Health Systems Research: can it make a difference?”
- Professor Alfred Ramukumba (South Africa, University of Limpopo – Medunsa Campus), who spoke on “Vision for OT in Africa.”

Professor Sharon Brintnell, President of WFOT and Professor Elizabeth Taylor from the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada were also present and both presented papers.

There were approximately 50 papers and 5 workshops presented by delegates from 15 countries which included: Australia, Canada, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, UK, USA, Zambia, Zanzibar. There were

also a number of very interesting posters and panel discussions.



**Keynote speaker Dr Hellen Myezwa with Prof. Lisa Wegner, Kate Sherry and Tanzanian pioneer OT Judith van der Veen.**

Social events are also a very important part of a Congress and delegates got together at mealtimes and at the Congress banquet held at the Boadzulu Resort. Very important contacts were made and old friendships renewed. Delegates from the Congress also had the opportunity to take day trips to other resorts along Lake Malawi such as beautiful Cape Maclear.

**Occupational Therapy Africa  
Regional Group (OTARG)  
Biennial General Meeting  
30 September 2009  
Mangochi, Malawi.**

**1. Persons representing their country and committee members in attendance:**

Alfred Ramukumba (Chairperson), Christa Meyer (Treasurer), Lisa Wegner (Secretary), Sharon Brintnell (WFOT Rep), Rosemary Crouch (Newsletter Editor), Vivyan Alers (South Africa), Botokro Rozenn (Togo, West Africa), Irene Gichioli (Kenya), Fiskani Allen Osborn Nkosi (Malawi), Eckiwe Kamanga (Zambia), Anthony Ephraim (Tanzania), Tammy Williams (Ethiopia), Hannah Kambowe

(Namibia), Sarah Matovu (Uganda), Musa Mansarray (West Africa-Sierra Leone), Bertha Mbuya (Student Rep-Tanzania).

**In attendance:** see list at end of Minutes.

**2. Welcome**

The Chairperson Alfred Ramukumba welcomed everyone. He asked for the meeting to be called a Biennial general Meeting as it is held every two years.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting**

These are available from the OTARG Secretary (Lisa Wegner). The Minutes were also published in the OTARG newsletter after the last conference (Zanzibar, 2007), and are available on the WFOT and OTARG websites. The Chairperson requested members to please keep the Secretary informed of any changes to their email addresses. The Minutes were proposed by Vivyan Alers and seconded by Anthony Ephraim. No further comments about the minutes were received.

Country delegates are requested to please ensure that AGM Minutes are handed over to future country delegates. Malawi commented that it was difficult to comment on the Minutes as they had not been seen.

**4. Membership**

The country membership fee is \$10 per year and \$20 for 2 years. The Chairperson proposed a country membership form with contact details of the OT Association and the delegates. The individual membership fee is \$5 per year and \$10 for 2 years. The individual and country membership forms will be available on the OTARG website. The committee agreed to keep country and individual membership fees the same but this will be reviewed at the next meeting.

The Secretary has a database of members available on request.

## 5. Annual Report

The Chairperson presented the Annual Report.

- Database: in Zanzibar it was requested that we have a database. We have this now but member countries are not receiving communications as they are for individuals. Therefore, the Secretary needs the Association's, and the individual delegate's, contact details and correct email addresses.
- Bank account: Christa Meyer worked on this and contacted Sharon Brintnell regarding the accounts and funds. Invoices and deposits need to be formal. Sharon suggested that we should register OTARG as a professional association or NGO, and the new Executive should explore this. It needs to be registered by a country but it does not have to be South Africa. WFOT is registered in Switzerland and the Secretariat is in Australia.
- OTARG Website: Vivyan Alers started the website together with Alfred Ramukumba and Rosemary Crouch. The website draft was sent to delegates for comment, and Julius Kameswiga accepted it. Members were requested to please comment and suggest corrections or updates (via Vivyan Alers). We have a webmaster Jenny Cook who regularly updates the website. Thanks were expressed to her.
- Congress 2009: the Chairperson expressed his appreciation and acknowledgement of the hard work of the Congress Organizing

Committee and Scientific Committee.

- The Executive is exploring how to link with Mozambique OT training.

## 6. Finances

Christa Meyer (Treasurer) reported that an OTARG bank account has been opened in Pretoria, South Africa. Alfred Ramukumba and Christa Meyer are signatories. Monthly statements are filed by Christa. R5 000 was paid for maintaining the website.

R5 500 was transferred to Malawi for conference purposes leaving \$7 000 (R56 000) in the account.

Christa requested the meeting to give a mandate to the Executive Committee to manage the money to its best interest. One option is to invest some money (about \$5 000) in a Money Market account, or invest money in an interest-bearing account (as a cheque account is does not earn interest).

### Motion

Chairperson and Treasurer have the authority to invest money in consultation with Executive Committee. Tammy Williams (Ethiopia) seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

The budget for the congress was \$8 500. The finances will be done before the end of the congress and hopefully we should be able to cover all cost of congress. All accounts will be paid by end of congress.

The Chairperson said that congress fees should be kept affordable. However, fees for congress are decided in accordance with the organizing committee. The Treasurer said that congress fees will most likely need to

increase as organizing a congress is getting more expensive, and in order to generate more funds to assist countries. The Chairperson proposed that the new treasurer will propose an increase in all fees (congress fees and membership) and put the proposal to the Executive Committee. A sliding scale for country membership should be considered. Vivyan Alers proposed that we investigate the possibility of obtaining sponsorships from pharmaceutical companies and other corporate sponsors.

Julie Schurgers suggested that we proactively advertise OTARG congress to other professionals to invite them to attend the congress.

## **7. Newsletter**

Rosemary Crouch (Newsletter Editor) proposed that the committee decides if the newsletter should continue as she has experienced difficulty getting contributions from countries and individual members.

Members were strongly in favour of keeping the newsletter. Rosemary Crouch was thanked for coordinating the newsletter.

The newsletter is a vehicle of communication that is important in terms of holding OTARG together and linking countries and members. Rosemary relies on members to submit stories for the newsletter and urged members to share what is happening in their countries to showcase occupational therapy. Students are also welcome to submit material. There have been two newsletters since the last Congress – one after the last congress in Zanzibar, and another one advertising this congress in Malawi. Both went out on

the OTARG and the WFOT websites. Suggestions for the newsletter (and the website) were stories about interesting projects, news, history, new developments, a discussion column, useful internet sites, questions to answer and reflect on etc. Members were encouraged to suggest themes for newsletters. Rozenn (Togo) offered to translate the newsletters into French to reach West and central Africa. She will also assist us to create a database of French-speaking countries and members. A Google translator can also be used. We would also need to translate into Portuguese (Mozambique).

## **8. Website**

Suggestions were made to create a FACEBOOK site and a Blog for OTARG. Congress paper presentations should be put onto the website as well. Photographs can also be put on but ethical issues and confidentiality need to be considered. People should consent in writing to have their photographs appear online.

## **9. OTARG Book for Africa**

Following on from the 6<sup>th</sup> OTARG conference, Jennifer Creek, who volunteered to be editor of the OTARG Africa book, is unable to carry on with the project. Rosemary Crouch and Vivyan Alers have taken over as editors. The Crouch Trust will provide seed money of R20 000 for the book (see Motion below). All funds generated by the book will accumulate to OTARG. Rosemary and Vivyan are following up on authors to get inputs from occupational therapists in Africa as they

need more chapters from authors in various countries in Africa creating a wider representation. There are 11 chapters at present. A meeting was scheduled during the congress for authors. A cover is in the process of being designed. Alfred Ramukumba proposed that member countries consider writing a chapter with two or more authors in their country. OTARG would like this to be an African (not a South African) textbook. One objective is that all 8 OTARG member countries contribute a chapter. Alfred reiterated there is no intention to exclude anyone and urged all interested people to contact Rosemary and Vivyan. The book will be promoted and sold at WFOT Congress in Chile 2010. Rosemary thanked Vivyan for coming on board with her. It was suggested that the book be revised and updated regularly and that the book be published as an E-Book.

**Motion**

The Chairperson motioned that R20 000 seed money be made available from the Crouch Trust fund to get the book going. Lisa Wegner seconded the proposal, and unanimously carried.

**10. WFOT**



Sharon Brintnell (Chairperson WFOT above) reported on the following:

- On the Education of Educators policy - the position of WFOT at a graduate level is being discussed.
- The Minimum Standards are to be reviewed soon and will most likely stipulate that entry level will be at Baccalaureate level.
- There is an urgent need to ensure mentorship and support between South Africa and other countries to upgrade diplomas to degrees.
- This year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WFOT contributing to WHO
- She extended an invitation to all to attend the WFOT Congress in Santiago, Chile 2010
- There is a low representation of African countries at Council – this is related to funding challenges. WFOT is trying to support member countries and there will be some support available to delegates presenting papers at WFOT as part of an effort to ensure greater participation by African member countries. Julius Kameswiga (Uganda) is OTARG’s representative to WFOT. Vivyan Alers suggested countries try to find funding from corporate/ pharmaceutical companies to attend Council. Visas can also be a challenge. Sharon urged people to sort out their visas for Chile timeously.

**11. Elections of Office Bearers**

***Term of office is four years with the option of standing a further two years.***

**Chairperson:** Alfred Ramukumba has served for four years and is available for another 2 years.

Alfred was nominated by Christa Meyer and seconded by Anthony Epraim. Alfred

Ramukumba was elected for a further 2 years.

**Vice Chair:** Brenda Ephraim.

**Treasurer:** Christa Meyer has served four plus two years. She is not eligible to stand.

This position is vacant. Fasloen Adams was nominated by Vivyan Alers, seconded by Denise Franzsen. She was elected by acclimation.

**Secretary:** Lisa Wegner.

**Member-at-large:** vacant. Alfred Ramukumba nominated Sylvester Butao (Malawi), seconded by Rosemary Crouch. He was elected by acclimation. He also became the WFOT delegate form OTARG.

**Student-member:** vacant. Tammy Williams nominated Winner Chimba (Tanzania), seconded by Anthony Ephraim.

**Newsletter rep:** Rosemary Crouch was unanimously reinstated.

**Website:** Vivyan Alers was unanimously reinstated.

## 12. 6<sup>th</sup> OTARG Congress 2009

The Chairperson of the Organising Committee Sylvester (Butao) and the organizational committee were thanked for their hard work and the Occupational Therapy Association of Malawi (OTAM) for their support. He also thanked employer organizations and all participants at the congress for their support.

The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee, Pat de Witt was acknowledged for her hard work and that of the committee. The good collaboration between The University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Limpopo staff was also noted. Pat also

thanked Sylvester Butao for his support. She said it had been a good experience and thanked all people involved. The committee had kept within budget and kept costs down. She thanked Denise Franzsen for the congress logo.

## 13. 7<sup>th</sup> OTARG Congress 2011

Zambia and Uganda offered to host the next congress in 2011. A vote took place and Zambia was elected to host the 7<sup>th</sup> OTARG Congress. Thanks was extended to Zambia, as well as to Uganda! The three universities in the Western Cape, South Africa will collaborate around the Scientific Committee. The next congress organising committee was asked to look at transport issues from the airport to the congress venue, as well as the timing of the congress considering all religious fasts/holidays/activities.

## 14. Additions to Agenda by Professor Theresa Lorenzo

### **Education Discussion-**

Ideas discussed were:

- Upgrading diplomas to degrees possibly as regional training. The new Executive could explore this further. It was acknowledged that something must be done and there is a need although it is a complex issue.
- Zambia – is starting OT education at the University of Zambia at degree level.
- Pat de Witt suggested a sub-committee to look at education issues and to develop a strategy.
- Sharon Brintnell proposed making groups around the priorities identified. People who want to represent their countries should give

their names to Lisa Wegner or write them up on the list provided at the meeting.

The meeting was closed by the chairman at 14h30.

**In attendance:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Country</b>
Meghan Dawson	South Africa
Donn □ Nel	South Africa
Lisa McGowan	South Africa
Clio Lawrence	South Africa
Fionna Kossmann	South Africa
Dan G Ndiga	Kenya
Sylvester Butao	Malawi
Modise Mogotsi	South Africa
Rosemary K Mbaule	Tanzania
Bertha K Mbuya	Tanzania
Kate Sherry	South Africa
Fasloen Adams	South Africa
Judith van der Veen	South Africa
Theresa Lorenzo	South Africa
Hanske Flieringa	South Africa
F.H Shimbambo	South Africa
Annah Lesunyane	South Africa
Riana Beot	South Africa
Elizabeth Taylor	Canada
Julie Schurgers	Zambia
Ros Hunt	Australia
Kathy Bowler	Malawi
AnneMarie W Hansen	USA
Kathy Gradidge	South Africa
Cathy Rice	South Africa
Leonie Farrow (Poppy)	Zanzibar & UK
Frances Hardman	UK
Emmanuel R Kisanga	Tanzania
Sr Mary Makyao	Tanzania
Anicet Lusale	Tanzania
Amina S Suleiman	Tanzania
Christina Sapali	Tanzania

Enos N Mwasake	Tanzania
Rabia K Kitigwa	Tanzania
George G Marop	Malawi
Elise Hoogenraad	Malawi
Kerry- Lyn Armstrong	South Africa
Claudia Freund	Kenya
Nafisa Abdulla	South Africa
Winner Chimba	Tanzania
Titi Titus Mwanjabe	Malawi
Denise Franzsen	South Africa
Anthony Ephraim	Tanzania
Tammy Williams	Ethiopia (SA)
Irene Gichohi	Kenya
Pat de Witt	South Africa

**In Conclusion.**

This Newsletter is only part of the total communication in OTARG today. This will be obvious if you read this document carefully. Make sure you also access the OTARG website at: [www.otarg.org.za](http://www.otarg.org.za) and also the WFOT website at [www.wfot.org](http://www.wfot.org) Make sure you keep abreast of everything that happens in OTARG. Start thinking now about the Congress in Zambia in 2011 and line up your sponsors. Also start working on some interesting aspect of the profession of occupational therapy and your research so that it will be in good time for the next congress for you to present. We are so extremely privileged to be part of this wonderful profession that is now making a real impact on the health services of Africa!

RBC 20/11/2009