



For more information on OT Education in Nigeria or if you are interested in participating in the volunteer programmes please contact:

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OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

1. ON-GOING PLANS TO PUT IN PLACE A VIABLE PROGRAMME WITH ADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR TRAINING

The most promising development is that the Occupational Therapy degree programme of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife has commenced.

My work towards the development of occupational therapy in Nigeria is focused on the following areas: -

- Working in liaison with Professor M O B Olaogun, Acting Head. Department of Medical Rehabilitation. College of Health Sciences of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, to assure the smooth running of the Bachelor of Medical Rehabilitation in Occupational Therapy, degree programme. This has commenced. The curriculum was first approved in 1977, but has currently been upgraded and re-approved by the University Senate in 2003. Prospective occupational therapy students have already been enrolled for the course and are currently undergoing their basic sciences programme jointly with physiotherapy students. Work is ongoing to ensure that the occupational therapy lecturers are in place, soonest.
- Seeking to ensure quality education for prospective students of occupational therapy by ensuring provision of staff for whom continuous personal development is relevant so that they can serve as role models for the students to whom they are responsible
- Working towards reopening closed clinical departments of occupational therapy in Nigeria, at least 12 in number, by seeking measures to provide occupational therapy staff for clinical training and services.
- Forwarding applications received from international sources to some of these institutions.

- Involving the Voluntary Services Overseas. Abuja. Nigeria.
- The contact person in VSO Abuja – Chikondi Mpokosa is willing to cooperate. She communicated that application forms received from interested institutions by end of October would be attended to immediately in order to attempt to make volunteer OTs available by February 2004; anything later, is expected to yield results by June 2004. (When she transfers in December 2003, Ms. Mpokosa will be replaced by Patrick Wajero. Contact email: Patrick.Wajero@vsoint.org)
- So far, a total number of 21 institutions and their Chief Medical Directors and Medical Directors have been made aware of this development as appropriate VSO forms were forwarded to them.
- The plan is ongoing to make this information available to more health institutions in Nigeria
- Making available a curriculum for Bachelor of Science degree in Occupational Therapy for College of Medicine University of Lagos. (Prepared jointly with a visiting occupational therapist, Mrs. Naomi Viljoen from South Africa and other occupational therapists in USA and UK in 2002).
- An ongoing process is the circulation of this curriculum to other Colleges of Medicine. The first target is five, which also represents the venues and the total number of degree programmes in physiotherapy already operating in the country

2. Issues on the Yaba School

- The Psychiatric Hospital, Yaba started a two-year training programme and calls it an occupational therapy school and not a school for assistants
- The Nigerian Medical Rehabilitation Therapists Board which is the Board set up by law to supervise physiotherapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy education and practice does not recognize the Yaba programme
- Yaba has been informed that the graduates are not registrable by the Board
- Yaba is calling their prospective graduates, occupational therapists (OT) and not occupational therapist assistants (OTA)
- The graduates of Yaba are going to be employed on level 6 (technician level) and they are going to be calling them occupational therapists
- Occupational therapists' counter parts, - the physiotherapists, a parallel profession to occupational therapy are starting off on level 9 following internship. During internship they are paid level 8.
- The starters believed that it was the way out for occupational therapy to survive in Nigeria.

- The occupational therapists educators working there have not undertaken any post graduate programmes since they qualified in the 60's / 70s as diploma graduates so they do not appreciate fully what is required to move from the level that they are committing the students to
- Yaba has not yet replied to the Nigerian Medical Rehabilitation Therapists Board to submit their curriculum of training
- The Federal Ministry of Health has asked Yaba to streamline their programme with the Board and action is yet to be taken on the matter
- As a member of the Board, establishing the status of the programme at Yaba is important from this point forwards because of the confusion it is going to create in the future between it and degree programmes, if no steps are taken at this time
- The planners of the Yaba programme were aware that clinical attachments was part of occupational therapy training and went ahead to take in over 20 students for a fresh programme without due consideration to their clinical training, supervision and availability of supervisors
- That in addition to current work overload, should the Board cooperate with this programme, only one occupational therapist (me) at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital would be available to accommodate the medicine and surgery clinical postings of over twenty students from Yaba for four weeks per session. This cannot be allowed to happen.
- The Nigerian Medical Rehabilitation Therapists Board maintains a very strong stand that Occupational therapy standards are not met by Yaba

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WFOT Delegate Nigeria
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