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NEWSLETTER EDITOR
Tatenda John Maphosa

Address:
53 Boydway
Southerton
Harare
Zimbabwe

Email:
tatendamaphosaj@gmail.com
Cell: +263 773165955

OFFICE BEARERS 2015 - 2017

Chairperson:
Peter Ndaa (Mr)
Ghana
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Vice Chairperson:
Tongai F. Chichaya (Mr)
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chichayatf@gmail.com

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Brenda Shuma (Mrs)
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emaknopanic@yahoo.com

Student Representative:
Victor Alochi (Mr)
Uganda
alochivictor@yahoo.com
Greetings to the OTARG family and the Occupational Therapy community at large. It has been while since our last newsletter, but I do hope I find everyone in good health in 2016. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep O.T.A.R.G friends and family updated on the events happening in the Occupational therapy world at large and keeps the spirit of oneness alive across the miles. The newsletter is a platform for each and every member of the O.T community especially in Africa to communicate with the rest of the family, letting us know what is happening in your various countries, as we move toward keeping the OTARG family together. Thus on behalf of the O.T.A.R.G committee, I encourage everyone to communicate more often, please do not hesitate to send in your articles for the newsletter.

This year 2017 we celebrate 100 years of our Occupational therapy profession. It is a historic landmark that we as OTARG are also a part of. To celebrate this historic year, the newsletter is to feature articles from some of the most influential Occupational therapists in Africa starting with this Edition of the Newsletter. Our featured articles in this edition will see us also celebrating the amazing journey that Dr Rosemary Crouch has taken throughout her career mainly aiming at aiding the development of the profession in Africa. The centennial couldn’t come at a more fitting time for the profession in Africa as we host our 10th O.T.A.R.G. Congress this year in Accra, Ghana. We are more excited as we look forward to hosting Occupational therapists from around the world for the first time in Africa in Cape town, South Africa in May next year at the 17th W.F.O.T Congress.

Both Congresses are calling for the submission of abstracts to be submitted by the 30th of April 2017 for OTARG 2017, and May the 4th 2017 for W.F.O.T 2018. All therapist from the continent, being trained or working within the continent or outside the continent are being called to join the rest of the world in celebrating 100 years of the profession by participating in these 2 historic congresses. We also look forward to receiving more articles to publish in the next editions of the OTARG Newsletter, but for now please enjoy the read!!!

Tatenda John Maphosa
The 10th OTARG Congress will be held in Accra Ghana in from 10th - 13th September 2017.

The Congress Theme is

"OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN AFRICA; CHANGING LIVES POSITIVELY"

The congress will be focusing on the following sub themes:

1. Research and evidenced informed practice
2. Meeting the challenges on NCDs
3. Policies, Education and Practice
4. Strengthening regional collaboration
5. PWD in socio-economic development
6. Innovation in rehabilitation practices

Call for Abstracts

Opening Date for Oral and Poster Submission | Nov 1st, 2016
Closing Date for Oral and Poster Abstracts | April 30th, 2017
Notification for Acceptance of Oral and Poster Abstracts | May 31st, 2017

Abstracts can be submitted online via the OTARG website link:

Or submit via email: abstracts2017@otarg.org.za

All abstracts of research findings, case studies, unique practice experiences, professional innovation and issues related to Enabling Occupation or Rehabilitation Sciences are welcome.

The presentations can be in the formats of oral or poster presentation.

Please feel free to indicate the presenter’s preference of presentation type at the time of submission. However, the Scientific Committee of OTARG reserves the right to assign the accepted abstract to an oral or poster presentation, depending on the content of the abstracts, time arrangement, and the balance of the categories.

Oral & Poster Proposals

Proposal must include the following information in order to be considered

- The title of the proposed presentation
- A short descriptive summary of the proposal (100-200 words)
- Titles and abstracts of all papers, with up to 500 words
- An abbreviated curriculum vitae or short biographical description (not to exceed 1/2 page) for each presenter, including any non-presenting co-authors.
Institutional affiliation and e-mail addresses for all presenters, including any non-presenting co-authors.
Please indicate one sub-theme of your contents within the congress subthemes
NO images, tables or graphs are allowed in abstract submissions.

Oral Proposals:

- Organized in English
- 10 minutes of presentation followed by 5 minutes of discussion including Q&A.
- The speaker for the presentation should be from any of the authors listed on the abstract submission.

More information can be obtained on the website: www.otarg.org.za

OTARG conference is organized biennially as a platform where Occupational Therapist and related professionals all over Africa and beyond gather to share ideas, deliberate on current issues and look at ways of progressing in the field.

The theme for this year’s conference is, ‘Occupational Therapy in Africa: Changing Lives Positively’. This has become necessary as the health demands of the growing world population require that the Occupational Therapy Profession, which is relatively new in most African countries, is well established to meet these growing needs.

The conference is scheduled for 10th-13th September, 2017, and it will be hosted in Accra, Ghana at the campus of the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). There will be a grand launch on the 11th of September, which we humbly require that you will be present to witness. Conference activities will include oral and poster presentations, workshops, and other successful innovative practices including the trend of socio-political issues and OT practice amongst a host of others.

There would be exhibition on-site as part of conference. Stakeholders and all other businesses whose services and products are related to ‘enabling independence’ in all occupational areas are invited to showcase their contribution to our philosophy in health and social care. Exhibitors should however give prior notice to conference organizers.

Conference fee is 500 USD (NON STUDENTS) and 300USD (STUDENTS). This caters for the registration, accommodation, conference materials and transportation from and to the airport.

There would be tourist/educational visit at extra cost.

Visit the OTARG website; otarg.org.za/Ghana for further information and enquiries.

We are confident that your participation in this conference will be of great benefit to your outfit, the Occupational Therapy Profession and humanity whom we serve.

PULICATION SUB-COMMITTEE

OTARG 2017
ACCRA, GHANA
Are you interested in volunteering some time to review abstracts for the WFOT Congress 2018? Register your interest on the Congress website:

http://www.wfotcongress.org/reviewers.php
ROSEMARY CROUCH AND THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY.

It is indeed a significant time in the history of the profession of occupational therapy this year as we turn 100 years old. So very much has been achieved by so many dedicated occupational therapists, many of whom have devoted their lives to the development of the profession world-wide.

As far as I am concerned I could not have found a profession that suited me more perfectly than occupational therapy. I wasn’t sure what it was about when I first started training in 1957 and as a matter of fact no one else knew very much about it either! The profession was fairly new and it was just by luck I chose the right one!

I was extremely fortunate to connect with a fast developing profession which has now found such a significant role amongst the Health Professions, not only in South Africa but because the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) is now part of the WHO (World Health Organisation), it has world recognition and status. I suppose in retrospect this is why the development of occupational therapy in wider Africa became such an important challenge for me. Somehow I have been along this road before!

So by far the greatest interest for me has been the development of OTARG in Africa which I have had the privilege to be part of right from the very beginning. As Delegate to the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) and Chairman of the WFOT Education Committee I was able to work alongside the legends and pioneers of occupational therapy in Africa, namely Jennifer Smyth in Uganda, Jacqueline Laurent in Mauritius, Judith van der Veen and Herma Grossman in Tanzania. Below are pictures of these pioneers:

Rosemary with Professor Alfred Ramukumba in 2014. Alfred was Chairman of OTARG for 4 years from 2005.

I visited Jacqueline Laurent (left) with her first contingent of occupational therapists in Mauritius in 1998.

In 1996 the Executive of WFOT visited Jennifer Smyth and her occupational therapy training programme in Kampala, Uganda and I was privileged to meet her. She is in the centre of the picture with Barbara Tyldesly President of WFOT. The other people in the picture are Jennifer’s staff.

One of many visits to Tanzania brought me into contact with Judith van der Veen and her wonderful work on the slopes of Kilimanjaro.
Herma Grossman with Charles Bulinda Lirhunde with their first graduates at Tumaini University in Moshi.

I was highly honoured to be the guest speaker at the first occupational therapy graduation in Moshi in 2003.

I was also very privileged to be at the very first meeting of OTARG in Moshi in 1996 and the Tanzanian Occupational Therapy Association came into being (TOTA).

Much of my special time as an occupational therapist has been spent attending the OTARG Congresses which together with the Newsletter is what has kept OTARG alive since the first Congress in Mauritius in 1999. At this Congress OTARG was officially formed. The Congresses have taken place every second year since then and grown greatly in strength.

Justine Nanyono from Uganda was appointed as Chairman, Jacqueline Laurent from Mauritius as Vice Chairman, James Botela from Kenya, and I was appointed as Treasurer and as the editor of the OTARG Newsletter at this meeting. I acted for a number of years until I was extremely fortunate to have Tatenda John Maphosa take over the Newsletter and he does a wonderful job.

With me is the new Chairman of TOTA Charles and the Secretary who now heads up the Occupational Therapy programme in Zambia.

Delegates at the Mombasa OTARG Congress in 2003.

Sharon Brintnell, President of WFOT, and Rosemary with a dignitary from Tumaini University at the OTARG Congress in Moshi Tanzania in 2005.
Rosemary with the OTARG delegates, Dan Ndiga and Charles Bulinda Lirhunde (HOD of the Tanzanian training) at the Swedish WFOT Congress in 2003. With usis Nighat Lodhi from Pakistan.

The last aspect of my history with OTARG is the development and publication of the very first OTARG publication “Occupational Therapy: An African Perspective” for which Vivyan Alers and myself were the Editors. So many wonderful pioneers and OTARG members from Africa contributed to this very informative book and it has been a great success. I hope so much that OTARG will keep up its visibility in the very effective way.

Lastly, at the age of 78 this year, I am still very active in the profession of occupational therapy and as Professor at the University of Witwatersrand I mentor and supervise post graduates but my main mission in life is to pass on my passion for my profession.

I would like to end by sending my very best wishes to OTARG members and I will most certainly be with you in spirit at your forthcoming Congress in Ghana.

Dr Rosemary Crouch
(PhD Occupational Therapy MEDUNSA, SA.)

OT @ 100 - A Life Journey

OT is a life journey that we are all walking through as individuals and professionals guiding us each day in our choices, understanding who we are and why we exist. This 100 year journey has seen many concepts, models, perspectives and new developments in the OT world, it just keeps getting better and richer in knowledge, skill, and diversity. With the changes in the world it has enabled us work outside the box of traditional OT practices, use evidence based practice, have cultural competences in client care and explore other occupation based concepts like; alienation, deprivation, justice and many others.

OT is a journey of great discoveries like those of Henry Ford of the light bulb and Thomas Edision of the automobile and most recently Steve Jobs of Apple Company that has developed one of the best phones and laptops, so even as OT we are not where we used to be 100 years ago. The world is beginning to understand more about who we are and what we can offer, which has in turn caused us to be even more innovative and vigilant in our service to humanity.

Sarah Matovu
OTARG President 2011-2015
Occupational Therapy values friendliness towards other people, respecting them and caring for them. With such warmth it creates a reciprocal liking, trust and bonding. Making someone happy, even for a short time, is worth more than words can say through finding ways of making them comfortable, independent in their environments and in turn improving their maximum independence/potentials. The objectives and foundations of this profession that puts people immediately at ease communicates that Therapists genuinely care. Occupational Therapy puts others first and has brought up professionals who choose to spend most of their time with clients, continuing to make them feel welcome and wanted.

I am a Zimbabwe trained Occupational therapist based in Lilongwe, Malawi. As the world celebrates 100 years of Occupational therapy existence, Malawi, the Warm Heart of Africa celebrates the centennial having opened a pediatric center in Lilongwe called Warm Heart Children’s therapy and wellness center. Malawi still has a long way to go in terms of Occupational therapy service provision, and we at Warm heart Children’s therapy and wellness center do invite all Occupational therapists and other stakeholders who are willing to partner with us to assist the people of Malawi to receive not only the OT services but the best services.

Farai Chirongoma
Occupational therapist
Zimbabwe/ Malawi
warmhearttherapy@gmail.com

The fact that Occupational therapy is both simple and profound is one of the things that fascinates me about the profession. On the one side of the spectrum we are concerned with helping people with the most mundane and ordinary of human needs like getting on and off a toilet. And on the other we are willing to take on board and act upon a huge philosophical agenda like occupational justice.

OT we know is an idea socially constructed in another culture at another time. There is no explicit understanding of occupation as a determinant of health within many of our local health knowledge systems in the same way that it is understood in the western tradition. And so the time is right to critically examine the relevance of ‘doing’, as it appears in current OT literature, to us in Africa and the Global South

We need to be proud of native knowledge systems and be brave not only to challenge prevailing understandings in our profession but also to bring into focus our own ways of understanding from within our own systems of thought and world views.
It can be scary especially when for many of us our livelihood depends on maintaining the status quo. But if we work collectively, what we can offer can become richer, much more relevant and be of greater benefit to the people we serve in our countries.

I also advocate that it is time to stop being protective about our territory and share our knowledge widely so more people working within the health and social care systems can incorporate our ideas about what helps human beings flourish.

I wish all my OT colleagues the very best on this journey. I also wish that the next hundred years will see us stepping up to the challenge of making our voices heard globally.

Radhika Kidao
Occupational Therapist
Seychelles

As the occupational therapy profession turns 100 this year, it finds decoloniality as a term becoming more relevant, particularly in the Global South. Decoloniality is a construct born out of continuing contestation about the need for decolonisation; an umbrella term used to designate struggles in every sphere of life, which are focussed on undoing the yoke of colonization. Whilst decoloniality on one hand acknowledges colonisation to be a historical phenomenon that was countered by liberation struggles across many parts of the world, it also emphasizes coloniality; a notion that reveals a pervasive western-led mode of civilization and modernity. This mode has continued beyond colonisation, and has sustained racism as an organizing principle that structures all of the multiple hierarchies of the world-system (Grosfoguel, 2011). As we look forward to the next 100 years, there will be a growing need for our practice, teaching and research to engage with what decoloniality means for the occupational therapy profession.

On the African continent, this conversation comes at the most opportune time, as we gear ourselves towards hosting the first ever World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT) Congress on African soil. As much as this is a space where we will look back on the past 100 years, it will also serve as a spring-board to map out how the profession can continue to grow while remaining relevant and capable of responding to the challenges that societies face not only on the continent, but globally. The theme for the congress, Connected in Diversity: Positioned for Impact, speaks to this aspiration. Indeed we will be celebrating the fact that collectively we would have hosted ten Occupational Therapy Africa Regional Congresses on the continent, counting with pride the number of doctoral candidates we would have graduated, showcasing practice and education innovations, and chronicling impressive publication records. Along with celebrating these significant achievements as a profession, we would also need to reflect on how well we have done towards building a just society, where human beings are able to engage in meaningful occupations regardless of nationality, political or religious affiliation, race, disability, gender, sexuality, economic status or any other identity that is often marginalised. Decoloniality has proven to be an important ideological and theoretical frame through which to interrogate not only practice, research, teaching and the governance of our profession, but also a way of being in the world.
When we decolonize not only the mind but also the spirit, then it is possible to be unoppressable (@ERamugondo via Twitter). In order to continue the conversation and engage in decoloniality work, let’s meet at the WFOT 2018 Congress.

Dr Elelwani L Ramugondo
Associate Professor in Occupational Therapy
University of Cape Town, South Africa

Reference:

"Helping people to live life their way, by overcoming obstacles, is the biggest reward."

When I first heard the term “occupational therapy” and learn what it is, I was ecstatic. I grew up with a passion for helping people. I loved children and had an irresistible call to try to help children with special needs. Pediatric Occupational Therapist sounded as the perfect profession for me! Since I started my career as an occupational therapist, working with children diagnosed with autism and their families, delivering services in special education school, my days are always memorable. My clients are sure to do something funny, unexpected, or heartwarming.

Occupational Therapy (OT) so broad, hence, it can be hard to define. For me OT is best described as the science of enabling engagement in daily living through occupations to achieve independence, being more productive and happy. Occupational therapist working in the pediatric setting support children and enabling them to achieve their maximum potential. We indirectly work on developing confidence, self-esteem, social skills, play skills and promoting general wellbeing in children. Along with their neurological background and their unique understanding of child development, pediatric occupational therapists are able to educate others on why some children are not being able to perform properly in different tasks. As a pediatric occupational therapist, I was trained to find the underlying reasons for why the child is having difficulty to perform at school and at home; and to consequently use appropriate techniques to remediate the situation.

Typically, I spend part of my day outlining activities, evaluating new clients and establishing therapy goals. Seeing a child overcoming his obstacles, being able to master new skills and being able to perform in his most valued activities, is what makes Occupational Therapy an incredibly rewarding profession for me. My aim is to help kids participate in meaningful and purposeful activities, so as for them to be able to enjoy life to the fullest. I may provide one-to-one care or small-group interventions, depending on each case and the goals to be met.

For most people in Mauritius, occupational therapy is a new concept. It is still a developing profession. There is also still a widespread belief that children with disabilities are not able to perform, which leads to social stigma for the family. However, attitudes are starting to change, with the help of many dedicated people who started to build Special Needs School and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO’s) for people
with disabilities. People who are working in the special needs field in Mauritius, are continuously striving to provide better care for children with disability and to provide them with the opportunity to overcome their obstacles by providing a variety of services, including Occupational Therapy, in their institutions.

Currently, the University of Mauritius (UoM) is offering a Bachelor degree in Occupational Therapy, accredited by The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) accredits the program and calls for at least four years of study. After, their Bachelor degree, some students decide to pursue their master’s degree overseas, while others try to pursue their career either in hospitals or schools. Since the beginning of the program at the UoM, in 2003, there are approximately over 50 qualified OTs working in the various field in Mauritius as well as overseas.

Kishan Ramtohul
Pediatric Occupational Therapist
Mauritius

OT in Morocco

The country of Morocco is currently without occupational therapy education nor profession, despite the brief introduction of the profession in 1960 through foreign aid work following a national disaster.

Morocco first had contact with the rehabilitation field, including occupational therapy, in 1960. During the fall of 1959, 10,466 Moroccans in the region of Meknes city became suddenly paralyzed with an unknown disease (Primeau, 1961). The source of this epidemic was found to be the consumption of olive oil that was mixed with inedible man-made lubricating oil, cresyl phosphates. This concoction was sold in markets for human consumption. This disaster overwhelmed the Moroccan healthcare system, and there were not enough hospitals or enough human resources to take care of the 10,000 people who were affected. Symptoms of the cresyl phosphate consumption were predominantly flaccid paralysis and sensory loss, among other symptoms. Morocco reached out to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Red Cross for assistance. Medical teams, including rehabilitation workers, arrived from 16 countries to help. There were five occupational therapists who were part of this medical aid to Morocco: two occupational therapists were from Canada and three were from Switzerland. It took 18 months for the rehabilitation team to discharge about 9,600 patients, all of them with no need for further treatment; however, the rest of the patients needed continued, regular treatment after the discharge. This is the first recorded documentation of occupational therapists practicing in Morocco. After the conclusion of the mission, a few Canadian physical therapists remained in Morocco, working in rehabilitation centers. The WHO hired two of the Canadian physical therapists as instructors in the Moroccan capital, Rabat, to teach a course to Moroccan physical therapy students (Primeau, 1961).

Millions of Moroccans are without access to rehabilitative and preventative healthcare (Council of Economic and Social, 2012). For this and other reasons and with the help of Handicap International, WFOT, and other professionals such as Dr. Said Nafai Morocco will start a Bachelor’s Degree in Occupational Therapy in French as of September, 2017. Dr. Said Nafai is planning on starting a Masters of OT in English by 2019. Dr. Said Nafai is the founding president of the occupational therapy association of Morocco. This is a great stride as we also join the
world in celebrating 100 years of Occupational therapy.

The OT Faculty Team in Morocco

Dr. Said Nafai
President OT Association Morocco

In accordance to the wording of the MoU, six Occupational Therapy students from the Department of Occupational Therapy, School of Allied Health Sciences, College of Health Sciences, University of Ghana visited Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, UK for 6 weeks in August 2015 to undertake their elective practice placements in the Trust hospitals.

Activities to achieve Learning outcomes

Activities organised for the student’s covered a wide-range of areas to ensure they gained a comprehensive experience of the OT service:

- Working with the community OT team;
  The students were given opportunities to shadow the community occupational therapy team. This provided valuable experience of seeing how OT is delivered within the patient’s home and patients who cannot easily access OT services in hospitals.

- Working in the hospitals and on the wards;
  The students spent much time in the hospitals to observe service delivery methods, meet with patients, help carry out assessments and provide patient care and support.

- Attending courses and lectures;
  The students attended a variety of in-house and external courses to learn about OT and associated services. For example, the students attended courses about neuro-splinting, rheumatology, OT support aids and equipment, physiotherapy and hand hygiene.

- Meeting members of staff;
  The students also met with a number of key and executive staff, such as a Deputy Medical Director and Deputy Director of Nursing. This provided them with an opportunity to learn about hospital management and leadership.

- Visit to Northumbria University
  The students also visited Northumbria University. A Senior Lecturer and Vice President of World Federation of Occupational Therapists, delivered a session about world OT and linked the students with OT students in Northumbria University. This was a valuable networking exercise for the students which helped to establish links and

Ghanaian Occupational Therapy
Students visit to Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, UK

Introduction

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has entered into a successful Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Ghana, Department of Occupational Therapy since 2012. As part of the collaborative work, NHCT will assist students from the department of occupational therapy to have their six-week elective placement in the UK, specifically within the Trust. This is one among other prospective collaborative works planned to come off in this relationship.
relationships between them, WFOT and OT students across the world.

Each student had the opportunity of being assigned to their individual experienced mentor. These mentors worked hard with the students to achieve their recommended competencies. At the end of their placement, the students successfully met their competencies and were awarded with certificates.

We are very grateful to the Trust, who are keen to continue to build relationship with the students as they progress in their careers as OT’s. The staff agreed to communicate via Skype for example, to provide ongoing support to these students where appropriate.

1. Promoting the development of an OT service in Ghana

It was interesting to know how the students’ visit attracted significant coverage from the UK media. They were filmed and interviewed by BBC TV and they also featured in lots of local newspapers discussing the development of OT service in Ghana. We appreciate this initiative organised by the team from NHCT.

As an institution we see this as an excellent opportunity to promote the great work of the University of Ghana through your assistance in supporting these students and the development of OT service in Ghana and the sub region. This has highlighted the partnership between both organisations and the benefits of working together to develop health care.

2. From the students

We have seen occupational therapy setting as it is, right from the hospital to the community and all other agencies associated in working to make the clients regain their independence. (Rosemary)

The multidisciplinary team work was exemplary, especially when every professionals input was recognised as important. Until we came to the Trust we never thought OT was that big and how important our role contributed in the early recovery of clients. (Sarah)

We strongly recommend that our colleagues also have this experience as we prepare to help to set-up OT service in the Ghanaian way and develop the profession in Ghana and the sub region. (Annabelle)

3. Appreciation

The Department of Occupational Therapy on behalf of the University of Ghana will like to appreciate Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust for your massive contribution to make this educational visit a success.

We hope you will always be there to assist while we also make everything possible for your maximum benefits in this relationship. We are happy to announce that the next batch of OT students in Ghana is so excited and can’t wait to be part of the next visit.

Together with the students we say thank you, we appreciate you all.

Peter O Ndaa
Coordinator, Occupational Therapy Programme
SBAHS
THE 2nd OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
DAY IN RWANDA 27th October 2016

MOTTO OF THE DAY: “Enhancing comprehensive rehabilitation services in Rwanda”

In UR-College of medicine and health science, Occupational therapy department has 41 students in total, 12 in level one, 15 in level two, and 14 in level three. Two levels are in Nyarugenge campus, that is level two and level three and level one is in Nyamishaba campus. Level two and level three (29 in total), the department staff in the university of Rwanda (Lydia Mih Бurd), Rwanda occupational therapy association committee (RWOTA), 3 occupational therapists (Mrs. MUREBWAYIRE Epiphanie, MUKAMWIZA Mediatrice, and Dias Byaruhanga) and our partner HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL participated in OT day celebration which took place in Gikondo area at Heroes school.

On the arrival at Heroes school, the chief of the village and the school at large welcomed us with great pleasure, and the Rwanda occupational therapy coordinator (Mr. KANYONI Maurice), Modulator of the day, introduced the group, and explained why we selected the heroes school to celebrate the day with them. “Because it is the school which helps Rwandan community to carefor children with disability, and in order to show our students that, there is much more that the Rwandan community needs from them as to why the university of Rwanda is teaching students in occupational therapy health profession to serve all those people”. He said.

MUREBWAYIRE Epiphanie, an Occupational Therapist, chairperson and a full member of Rwanda Occupational Therapy association (RWOTA) said: “Health professions work as a multidisciplinary team, to give the best service to the community, that why the university of Rwanda together with our partners Handicap International, began Occupational Therapy in a year 2014 and officially launched 28th August in 2015, to serve the gap in rehabilitation services as to improve the quality and independent lives of the people and bring meaning”. She said the main challenge we have is that we are still few in number than what is required.

Headmistress (the leader of the association) of the school; Mrs. NIYITEGEKA Sixteen gave us a welcome and told us the history of the school. The school began in 2014 under the cooperation of parents whose children with disability and it is now serving more than 50 children, and 12 of them a day by day are receiving care services to help them improve independency. The school has one speech therapy, one physiotherapist and the parent’s committee who are working in a collaboration to develop child’s independency. She said. Again she said that there is still a gap for occupational therapy to strengthen the team.

Furthermore, Mrs. NIYITEGEKA Sixteen said, “the challenges we they have, are short space, and difficulty in community motivation and marshalling or mobilization most especially to those families whose children with difficulties to be aware of these difficulties and take care of their children”. Additionally, the parent’s representative said that the main challenge is the parent’s ability to afford payments to this school and child’s health insurance and finally gave gratitude to the audience especially the University of Rwanda that is teaching Occupational Therapy students who will be delivering rehabilitation services in future as well.

Immediately, after her speech and welcome, the occupational therapy students and occupational therapists, parents and their children, gathered in 3 groups to demonstrate how occupational therapist delivers a rehabilitation services in rehabilitation settings.

The first group, Occupational Therapist Diaz Byaruhanga; a care giver an OTs in Gahini hospital was a group leader, and the group
demonstrated a normal sitting position in a chair, he explained more about sitting position even in a wheelchair. Group two did a leisure activity playing cards Ball in sitting position, with children, parents and some teachers from the school. The group leader was MUREBWAYIRE Epiphani an Occupational Therapist in from Rwanda Military Hospital, and she explained to the parents the benefits of play activity to children with disability and advise parents to do so at home. Group three worked on functional mobility like using a modified chair in toileting and a walker, and the group leader was an Occupational Therapist Mrs. Lydia Mihi Burd, Lecturer and head of Occupational Therapy department at the university of Rwanda. Finally, we shared the food and drinks with parents and their children and thereafter, the modulator Mr. KANYONI Maurice closed the session and thanks giving to the school and other participants who has attended the ceremony as well.

Done by class representatives:

KARANGWA Jean Pierre and Potien
UWIHOREYE

VISIT OUR WEBSITES

OTARG WEBSITE:
www.otarg.org.za

W.F.O.T Website:
www.wfot.org

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN AFRICA; CHANGING LIVES POSITIVELY