

# **Occupational Therapy; Thriving on Opportunities**

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Occupational therapists are often referred to as allied health and/or rehabilitation professionals and whilst many therapists are positioned primarily in health systems others work within social and community settings. Occupational therapy philosophy supports this by transcending health and encompassing environmental and social determinants of health and well-being. As such occupational therapy is impacted upon by the changing world as well as the changing health environment. Occupational therapists therefore need to understand what is impacting on the health and social landscape of today as well as the future in order to be best positioned to meet the opportunities available to us as a profession.

Recent World Health Organization data from various sources shows an increase in the ageing population worldwide, an increase in prevalence of non-communicable diseases, at least 16 percent of the global population experiencing a significant disability and more than 2.5 billion people worldwide in need of one or more assistive products. Alongside this climate changes are affecting daily lives and manmade and natural disasters are impacting and infringing on persons and communities' access and participation in chosen occupations. These are all areas where occupational therapy can make significant contributions and by reviewing such global trends we can examine what they may mean for us as occupational therapists. Taking into consideration and reflecting on how we retain the values and principles that are the foundation of our profession whilst exploring the scope offered by the range of opportunities to meet global, regional and local needs.

Approaches to strategic thinking and planning will be discussed as well as the role each one of us has in promoting the value of occupational therapy to ensure occupational therapy is best positioned to drive its own destiny.