

What needs to be done? Occupational therapy responsibilities and challenges regarding human rights

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The 15th WFOT World Congress in Chile is a landmark for the profession. So far, WFOT World Congresses have mostly taken place in countries associated with the original historical roots of occupational therapy. Going South inevitably brings with it a change in focus which is essential to allow the connection of contemporary worldwide practices within a more inclusive framework. By conveying fresh experiences and narratives, the shift in scenario results in an opportunity to challenge hegemonic views on occupational therapy and, as such, to create new possibilities for the profession. Attending the WFOT 2010 World Congress in Chile will certainly be an opportunity to take part in this construction.

Being held for the first time in a Latin American country, the WFOT 2010 World Congress invites a readdressing of social issues and cultural contexts. The debate on human rights, despite being universal, takes on a different meaning when it occurs in a place where human rights were sorely disregarded in past history. Previous Latin American dictatorial experiences, as much as their contemporary redemocratization dynamics, are historical processes, which have provided singular meanings for words and expressions such as: **citizenship, human needs, human rights, collective action, participation, subjectivity, and social equality**. The opportunity for sharing these perspectives with practitioners and researchers across the world is truly appealing. Furthermore, Chile's unique history of social engagement and political resilience is as symbolic as it is inspiring for occupational therapists and occupational scientists concerned with social justice.

At first glance, the congress programme reveals some Latin American imprints, such as the presence of Latin American authors in a frequency unique to this Congress. It also expresses a worldwide tendency to approach social themes and to engage in reflective and critical thinking. This is easily seen in the references to culture, social issues, and human rights, which appear in large supply. The programme is enriched by an intriguing and inviting composition, which reflects the complexities of the profession. On one hand, the presentations echo historically rooted terminologies as well as approaches that were developed over time; on the other, they point at current trends and critical reflections, which express contemporary needs and challenges.

Addressing human rights issues brings forth ethical and political responsibilities for occupational therapists. It is crucial to think of strategies for action and identify the challenges that lay ahead. Previous experiences and contemporary reflections may help us to think what needs to be done.