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## **Diversity matters: Guiding Principles on Diversity and Culture, a WFOT project**

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### **Introduction**

Following the congress in Sydney in 2006, which highlighted culture and diversity in occupational therapy, the WFOT Council decided to prepare a document discussing approaches to this theme. The presentation addresses the results of the project.

### **Objectives**

The document aims to encourage occupational therapists worldwide to discuss, appreciate and incorporate diversity and culture into their daily practice, education and research to meet the occupational needs of people throughout the world.

### **Description**

Project management methodology (Binder 2007) was used composing the document; this involves a process of reciprocal discussions between project leaders and a feedback group until consensus is reached. In this case the worldwide feedback group consisted of 48 occupational therapists, experts from different fields, (practice, research, education, management). Their feedback was vital and contributed greatly to the quality of the document. The final version of the document will be completed in spring/summer 2009 and is to be published on the WFOT website.

### **Results/Discussion**

Discovering the various ways in which people perform occupations in relation to their culture and give them meaning can be a challenging and enriching experience for everybody involved (both clients and therapists).

The document describes four guiding principles:

- 1. Diversity matters: the facts
- 2. Human rights and inclusiveness matters: occupation, participation and cultural safety
- 3. Language matters: the power of words
- 4. Competence matters: attitude, knowledge and skills

The presentation discusses these guiding principles in depth as well as how the document can be used in practice, education, research and professional development.

### **Conclusion**

The document encourages a continuing dialogue on the underpinning values and norms of occupational therapy, to promote critical evaluation of current practices, education, research and management in terms of culture, diversity and inclusion.

### **Contribution to the practice of occupational therapy**

Consideration and discussion of ways to appreciate and value diversity and differences in peoples' life styles facilitate acknowledgement, comprehension and acceptance of diversity and culture as

something that enriches, professionally and personally. This dialogue enables the profession to contribute actively to a more inclusive world.

- 1. Binder J., (2007) Global Project management. Communication, Collaboration and Management Across Borders, Gower Publishing.