



Chairperson's Report

AGM June 2022

It's been three years since we formally launched SANATA and I have now completed my first term of office as the Chairperson.

This report will give a strategic review of our activities and challenges over the last year and point out some future direction. I will also be reporting back on the areas of future focus mentioned in last year's report.

Before I do that, it may be helpful to remind ourselves – old and new members - of the structure and purpose of SANATA.

SANATA is led by four office bearers – Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. They form the Secretariat and are the core organisational team. Then there are six portfolios and they are each headed by someone who convenes and chairs a committee for their portfolio. The secretariat and Portfolios form the core of the Executive Committee.

In addition, we have representatives who are not directly elected onto the Exco but who bring important voices to inform the work of the Exco. These are representatives of our

students and interns and the HPCSA rep. Until today, our professions reps have also played a more informal role. We now are proposing to have elected coordinators who will have greater responsibility for coordinating the strategic development of each of the professions.

In terms of our purpose as an Association, simply put, we have a responsibility to address three key elements:

1. Provide services to our members (internally focussed – CPD, providing information, resources, access to special rates etc)
2. Engage outside our Association about our professions (lobbying, communication, research and publications, education)
3. Ensure the growth and development of our professions

Most of our committees have more or less of each key element at the heart of their work.

Organisational Capacity:

The end of the intensity of the COVID period has meant that the pace of life and work has picked up incredibly, with many people who are involved in our committees, reporting feelings of overwork and overwhelm. This has certainly affected the capacity of SANATA to achieve some of the goals set for the last year. Due to a change in my personal circumstances, I too have had less capacity this past year to drive certain areas of our organisational programme.

A number of our committees have not been fully operational this last year. The resignation of Carol and leave of absence of Andeline left a leadership gap in both the Education and Research Committees which we hope to address now with new Chairpersons who can take the work of the Committees forward.

Nethanielle was co-opted to the role of Chairperson of the Communications Committee and has led so far with passion and dedication, pulling together a whole new committee of keen members. We are looking forward to our first public magazine which showcases and spreads the word of the arts therapies in a beautiful format.

Calsey also stepped bravely into the challenging role of Chairperson of the CPD Committee when Marlize moved to the Secretary role towards the end of 2021. She has been well supported by the rest of the CPD committee, particularly Sunelle. It is wonderful to see new blood step into leadership roles and I'd like to acknowledge and thank both Nethanielle and Calsey for stepping up.

Growth in the membership of all the committees will certainly help to increase their capacity and achieve more.

Professionalisation

This issue was identified in last year's report as needing attention. The secretariat, which consists of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer continues to meet every two weeks to ensure the smooth running of the organisation as the Exco meets only 4 times a year and there are a lot of issues that arise on a continuous basis. I'd like to acknowledge these members for their commitment to these meetings – we meet at 7am!

After three attempts, we have finally found the right person to support us as our virtual assistant. Initially her main role will be to provide administrative support to the CPD committee whose admin burden has increased phenomenally since changes to requirements introduced by the HPCA. As time goes, she may be able to assist in other areas which require admin support. Our limited funds prevent us from employing her for a more substantial number of hours a month.

Strategic Direction:

We began with the strategic review last year but soon realised that we did not have the capacity to take it forward in its imagined form. The Exco then decided to develop a strategy document and Vasintha assisted the Exco by facilitating a strategy workshop where we identified 5 priorities:

1. Shape relationships/partnerships
2. Fundraising (for Bursaries)
3. Creating employment opportunities – (1 public sector post)

4. Advocacy/PR marketing – presence in the public space
5. Strengthen internal connections

Out of this process, we identified some steps that could be taken including setting up an Advocacy Task Team, organising a symposium, streamline committee programmes to align with the priorities, organise branch meetings and revisit the role of the Secretary in terms of streamlining organisational effectiveness.

Lobbying and Advocacy:

This was another of the areas that were identified both in the Exco strategy documents and in the way forward in my last report. However, only two people responded to an invitation to be part of a Lobbying and Advocacy Task Team and the team met in August and generated some ideas. Then a meeting was held with key members of our community in October to look at ways to advocate for employment opportunities for arts therapists. Some important suggestions came from this meeting, however, due to a lack of capacity none of these ideas have been implemented.

Furthermore, the idea of a symposium to take place this year as proposed by the Exco strategy process was intended to address many of strategic priorities identified above. However, at the beginning of this year, the symposium committee met and proposed that this take place next year as the time was too short to organise anything substantial.

Unfortunately, there is nothing further to report on our application to GEMs for scheme inclusion or our long and drawn out process with Medschemes to be included as PMB. This is incredibly frustrating as success in either of these campaigns would make a significant difference to our professions.

Just recently, we have also begun resuscitating the campaign for our own medical aid codes. Hopefully we will have some progress to report at the next AGM.

Advocacy needs a dedicated effort and the Exco will need to reconsider its approach to this matter.

Students:

Three Dramatherapy students volunteered to share the roles of representing students on SANATA committees in the last year. They sat on the Exco, Membership committee and the Education Committee and more recently on the Communications Committee. While we were unable to establish a formal Student Forum, our three Student reps made significant efforts to create connection between the different student communities at the three universities. Several successful meetings of students were held online where they were able to share their modalities with each other. Mostly art therapy and dramatherapy students participated.

We were unable to find an intern rep this past year. There are many challenges for interns who struggle to concentrate on their clinical placements and therefore have no capacity for being involved organisationally. An effort will be made to try to bring an intern rep onto the Exco this year.

Engaging our members

Steps were taken to establish the beginnings of a graduate support programme this last year. In August last year, a welcoming ceremony was organised for about 19 recently graduated dramatherapy and music therapy students. These graduates were then allocated a mentor each to help them navigate starting their professional lives as arts therapists. I believe that this has been supportive and look forward to hearing more feedback on this programme from both mentors and new graduates.

This was followed up by the establishment of the monthly Connection Space at the beginning of this year. It is aimed at supporting not only recent graduates but all members who need information and resources and a space to connect around common issues of concern.

This year, if we can get more people who are willing to support the Membership Committee we can concretise and structure the Graduate Support programme into a fully fledged programme.

Towards the end of 2021, I organised consultative meetings with members from our different professions. This resulted in the establishment of monthly professional meetings of dramatherapy members where new graduate and more established members can share a common platform of experiences. Among the music therapy members, new volunteers took up the job of organising monthly CPD meetings for music therapists. My hope is that the election of profession coordinators will consolidate these developments.

Transformation:

While we have not addressed this issue specifically, I believe that many of the actions taken this year have taken us a few steps forward in creating a more welcoming and supportive organisation for our diverse community.

Looking Forward:

It will be very important to consolidate the Exco soon after the AGM in order to build a strong cohesive leadership structure as there will be a significant number of new EXCO members after this AGM. We hope to hold an in person strategic meeting at the end of August to develop both relationships and a common vision of where SANATA needs to be going.

Priority areas for the next year include:

- Supporting the profession coordinators in developing their new roles
- Supporting the new portfolio committee chairs
- Finding creative ways to expand our advocacy efforts within our limited capacity
- Engaging students in more structured ways
- Consolidating our graduate support programme
- Improving our media presence

I am mindful of the voluntary nature of the work that we do in SANATA. While there is always so much to do, if we are strategic and can spread the load of the work, I believe that we can achieve a lot.

Thank you to everyone who has participated in the work and programmes of SANATA over the last year. You all contribute to the life of the organisation. We hope to keep serving you and your passion for our professions

Michelle Booth

Chairperson