Nasir tells of his experiences as a student orthopaedic technologist as he embarks on his third and final year of the program:

“My name is Nasir Ahmad, from Afghanistan. I worked for the Handicap International organization in a physical rehabilitation centre before attending the Cambodian school of Prosthetics and Orthotics (CSPO). I have been studying at CSPO in Phnom Penh, Cambodia since 2009. I am really interested in prosthetics & orthotics as I used to work in this field as a SACH prosthetic foot maker for several years. I’m really enjoying study in CSPO. My hope and dream for the future is to become a professional prosthetist/orthotist to help and support the poor and disabled people in Afghanistan by providing good physical rehabilitation services.

A good day in my life is when I saw myself growing among the international students at CSPO. I learn a lot from them. We are enjoying studying together and they have become my wonderful friends and we have made good and unforgettable memories since the first day I came to CSPO.

A positive event at CSPO is when I gave a presentation in front of my examiners during module exam and I successfully passed. Answering all the questions from the examiners with professional knowledge and in a professional manner was not easy!! I struggled and still struggle now. Passing every exams and tests are my goals and I have been and will be working hard.

Since I came here, I have observed two graduation ceremonies. I saw that graduates were pleased to return to their home country upon graduation after three years of hard work and comprehensive studying. Being far from the family to study at the CSPO is not easy and we need to have a lot of effort and concentration. I found it quite difficult in the beginning but after the academic module in the first three months, a combination of the professional and friendly lecturing team of CSPO and my own hard work helped me to improve my theoretical and practical skill and knowledge to be able to continue my studies. I am thankful to the entire team at CSPO for being so passionate about the profession and helpful to the students. I am also thankful to all my patients/clients who are the wonderful people of Cambodia who have played a very important role in my study”.

Meet Nasir Ahmad who is a third year student at CSPO. Nasir is part of a rehabilitation plan for Afghanistan where trained physical rehabilitation clinicians are desperately needed to provide prosthetic and orthotic services to persons with disabilities in the country. The number of people with physical disabilities has been exasperated by conflict meaning the number of traumatic injuries is high. More information about the training program at CSPO can be found at www.cambodiatrust.org.uk.
Graduate profile:
Mr Kerio Raphael, USAID-ISPO scholarship award holder 2007-2010.

Graduating from the University of Tumaini, Tanzania in 2010, Kerio now works as a prosthethist/ orthotist in the Kenyatta National Hospital in Kenya. He sees a range of patients requiring prothetic and orthotic provision. Besides being a clinician, Kerio also serves as an external lecturer at Kenya Medical Training College in Nairobi, Department of Orthopaedic Technology. He is the serving FATO Kenya Chairman and was the National Coordinator of the recently concluded FATO Survey of Orthopaedic Devices and Functional Rehabilitation.

Kerio says “Having graduated as the Best Student in the Diploma in Orthopaedic Technology from the University of Dar es Salaam in 2005, the thirst for success had been ignited within me and after 2 years of working experience, USAID/ISPO awarded me a scholarship to pursue a BSc. in Prosthetics & Orthotics from Tumaini University in 2007. It was another opportunity of training in a multinational and multicultural set up where the blend of experienced professionals and those new in the field gather and interact meaningfully in achieving academic degrees in P&O. TATCOT offers the enabling environment for such students and being ISPO recognized, training meant clear guidelines were followed. Faculty and students blended well and the support from USAID/ISPO was always reliable and made learning smoother. I personally had a fabulous academic experience and had a personal vow to USAID/ISPO to reward them with excellent performance. Upon completion in 2010, I successfully graduated as The Best Overall Student and Best Student in Biomechanics. I returned to my home country and continued working in Kenyatta National Hospital where I specialize in major cases. The degree has broadened my way of thinking as a professional and has equipped me with added analytical clinical skills and techniques for best practices. The research component particularly has left an indelible mark in my life since I practice the technique to date”. More information about the Tanzanian program at TATCOT can be found at www.tatcot.org

The following is a sample of Kerio’s student work – an abstract from his final thesis:

TITLE: To assess the efficacy of immediate prosthetic fitting to trans-tibial amputees after surgery in Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre.
The aim of this study was to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Immediate Post-Operative Prosthesis (IPOP) technique against the currently practiced mode in the centre.
Post-amputation regimens commonly involve the application of a soft dressing and a light compression bandage while awaiting wound healing. This is followed by the application of a coning bandage to facilitate stump reduction.
A prospective study of a case series of six amputees (5 male and 1 female) who underwent the application of an IPOP technique between February 2010 and May 2010 was conducted in KCMC. Utilizing this therapy, rehabilitation and prosthetic application commenced immediately post operatively within the operating theatre and run in tandem with wound healing.
Findings revealed that mobilization with crutches or a walker on temporary prosthesis was achieved within five to seven days post amputation. Physical therapy and nursing care of the wound was undertaken with ease courtesy of the design of the IPOP. Pain assessment was undertaken alongside recording of range of motion and muscle strength assessment. Acute length of stay was recorded to ascertain periods of bed occupancy. The clips were removed 3-4 weeks post amputation depending on wound healing and subjects were ready for the definitive prosthesis by 8 weeks. The study revealed diminished post-operative pain and oedema, muscle strengthening, cardiovascular fitness, minimization of contracture development and accelerated wound healing when compared to the standard compression bandage technique. All these underpin the potential benefits of the IPOP therapy which became apparent in the study.
In summary, the IPOP technique was found to accelerate wound healing and overall rehabilitation of amputees in KCMC thereby inducing their early return to independent ambulation and society integration.
Key references:

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Student Profile: Rahima Akther, Bangladesh – Lower Limb Orthotics. Award 2010-2012

It takes a couple of minutes for one to realize that Rahima’s gaze deviates from the usual. Losing her left eye to a freak bird bite as a young child, Rahima has been through many traumatic experiences as she came to cope with this disability.

Rahima comes from Bangladesh, a country highly prone to natural disasters. 14.8 million people in Bangladesh have some form of disability (based on the World Health Organization estimate). There are many organizations sharing the disability development work in Bangladesh. The government and Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) being among of these many providers.

Rahima joined CRP in 2007 and worked for about 3 years as an assistant in the rehabilitation centre before she was selected to undergo a formal training in Lower Limb Orthotics at Mobility India on a USAID funded scholarship. Rahima says “After working for 3 years at the centre, I was very keen to learn more about this work. I am happy I got the opportunity to train for this certificate course with which I can fabricate appliances “

Rahima will soon complete her clinical attachment at Mobility India and return to Bangladesh and support the needs of her centre. CRP’s headquarters are in Savar where Rahima will be placed, the only women technician in the centre. Rahima will work at Savar, located at a distance of about 24 km to the northwest of Dhaka (capital city) and also at Mirpur, located in the city. Approximately 20-25 disabled people visit the centre each day for new assessments, follow-ups and repairs.

Rahima was married 2 years ago and her husband holds a government job. She is looking forward to a successful career and a family life. As a woman who has risen above her disabling challenges, Rahima is a fine role model for many women to emerge from the confines of their homes and seek rehabilitation.

Further information about Mobility India can be found at www.mobility-india.org

Congratulations to USAID funded scholar

Damiano Maina Mwangi

who recently graduated from Tumaini University with a bachelor degree in Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO Category 1) and was also awarded a

CERTIFICATE OF BEST PERFORMANCE
Support for rehabilitation service in Vientiane

Among the latest group of new students entering the Vietnamese Training Centre for Orthopaedic Technologists (VIETCOT) are a group of four students from Vientiane, Lao People’s Democratic Republic who will be training towards delivering services for the team of personnel at Rehabilitation Centre 686. The Centre belongs to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) and today the experienced personnel working at the centre have had short term or on the job training and more trained professionals are needed. Among other devices, about 380 trans-femoral prostheses, 559 trans-tibial prostheses and 33 arm prostheses are produced each year at this busy centre.

The Vietnamese and Laos Government are now working on a plan to rebuild the factory with a vision for it to become a hospital for Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation not only for veterans but also for other people with disabilities. It is envisaged that there will be a staff of 85 people of whom 16 will be physicians. The hospital plans include a rehabilitation department, operation rooms, post-operative treatment room and an orthopaedic workshop. Da Nang Hospital for Rehabilitation and Orthopaedic of Vietnam was appointed to support the implementation of the plan and will support further training of physicians and physiotherapists. VIETCOT will cooperate in developing clinical and technical staff with further training including special topics such as arm prosthetics and spinal orthotics each year.

The four USAID funded students are attending the ISPO Category II evaluated program in orthopaedic technology at VIETCOT. More information about VIETCOT can be found at www.vietcot.netnam.vn

Facilities at the centre require development

Did you know…there are 23 prosthetics and orthotics programs across the world that have been evaluated and recognised by ISPO? Every year hundreds of students graduate from these programs, but many more professionals are needed to deliver prosthetics and orthotics services globally.

Articles, pictures and news to Sandra Sexton, ISPO Grant Manager
Email: sandra@ispoint.org

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