

Training: Samuel in Cambodia

Our Best Student!

In our last newsletter we reported that Samuel Mkomera from Malawi, a former technician at the 500 miles P&O Centre in Lilongwe, would soon graduate from CSPO with a 3-year international diploma and that we are looking forward to his return to work for us in March. Together with The Shoe Zone Trust, which funded a large part of Samuel's studies for us, we are extremely proud and happy to hear that he has won the school's "best student" award, voted for by his peers, just as he has passed his final exams. Samuel writes here about his experiences in Cambodia.

My whole journey started in March 2017 when I joined Cambodia School of Prosthetics and Orthotics (CSPO). I was so delighted in knowing that my dream will come true. The school time had been so amazing! However, I had to overcome many challenges.

CSPO's teaching programme is based on a system of nine modules, including prosthetics, orthotics, anatomy, pathology and other related subjects that help students to have an overall understanding of the service required and the ability to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities. In addition, students are trained in leadership,



Samuel collecting his Student of the Year award

where we are trained on how to cooperate with their workmates and how to lead as managers.

In addition to the studies, we were given chances to explore

Cambodian cities, provinces, historical places and other recreation places. Visiting these places helped me to understand Cambodian culture, the people and their behavior.



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was a big assignment for me! Just imagine – I was supposed to lead students from more than 10 countries with different languages, cultures and behaviors. However, with my little leadership skills, plus being humbled and friendly to everyone, I succeeded until when I finished my term for one year.

It wasn't easy to adapt to the Cambodian environment at the beginning. I can't forget my first day going to the market where all the people around the market place were just staring at me.

Being the point of attention from the surrounding people was my big challenge. The other challenge was that I found Cambodia hotter than Malawi. It was also very hard to talk to my family due to time differences and high costs for international calls.



Associating with different people helped me to meet many friends in Cambodia, in addition to my school friends. However, most of my friends are unable to speak English clearly, so I had to learn the local language (Khmer), which I succeeded to the extent that I am able to communicate well with the locals in the markets, transport services and leisure centres.

When I was in my second year, I was elected to be the President of the Student Association. That

Cambodians are friendly and hardworking hence I would like to follow their working habits. I have also learnt how to interact with different people plus learning a new language. In addition to that, clinical internship had equipped me with a lot of experience that am ready to apply them at my work in helping People with Disabilities when am back to Malawi.



Hard at work in the workshop



Making friends: left, with his fellow students on the football pitch and, above, showing off their latest work