

P&O EDUCATION ///

Worldwide unique Blended Learning Education Program

Accredited by the ISPO in February 2017, the Blended Learning Cat II to Cat I Upgrade Programme in Prosthetics and Orthotics developed by Human Study e.V. represents a powerful solution to increase the quality and availability of P&O services in countries and regions which have no access to P&O education.

The unique Blended Learning Cat II to Cat I Upgrade Programme in Prosthetic and Orthotic Sciences (P&O) leading to Bachelor Degree, developed and implemented by the **German non-profit organization Human Study e.V.**, in collaboration with **the Mahidol University in Thailand**, received its accreditation by the International Society in Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO).

The ISPO Category I accreditation of this Upgrade Program marks a breakthrough in the delivery of recognized P&O education, utilizing the Blended Learning Education model.

A successful pilot program

The graduation of the pilot batch of the first generation of students in the Cat II to Cat I Upgrade Programme took place in December 2016 in the facilities of the Sirindhorn School for Prosthetics and Orthotics SSPO, Siriraj Medical Faculty, Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand. Human Study expresses its utmost gratitude to its partner, the SSPO at the Mahidol University, under the leadership of Dr. Nisarath Opartkiattkul, providing additionally



First group of successful Human Study BSc./Cat.I graduates

their Bachelor Degree in Prosthetics and Orthotics to the successful candidates.

In the light of this pilot program, Human Study e.V. has expanded the program and opened opportunities for students in many countries. Currently there are students enrolled from Afghanistan, Malawi, Togo, Tunisia and even Spain to this educational program.

A generation of P&O professionals which will contribute to major changes in their countries as they represent a solution to address an ever growing world dilemma given an enormous need of P&O services but a limited access to professional education in this field.

The three years training model is based on a dual educational approach which combines e-learning practice with on-site hands-on clinical workshops and seminars.

The Blended Learning Education allows participants to complete the training while staying productive at their workshop facilities, treating patients and keeping a regular income. The participants have the opportunity to apply what they have learned immediately to their working routines, constantly improving service quality for patients.

THE GLOBAL SITUATION /// Shortage of P&O professionals

More than a billion people in the world today experience disability. These people often have limited access to education, fewer economic opportunities and higher rates of poverty. This is largely due to the barriers they face in their everyday lives, rather than their disability. Disability is not only a public health issue, but also a human rights and development issue. WHO's efforts to support Member States to address disability are guided by the overarching principles and approaches reflected in the *WHO global disability action plan 2014-2021*, the *World report on disability*, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

All relevant studies in the field reveal the dramatic absence of trained P&O professionals capable of providing standardized quality of service as recommended by the International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The demand is immense – for approximately **30 million people in need of prosthetic and orthotic services in developing countries**, an estimated number of required educated professionals is 150,000.

Currently, in the developing world (with a population of 6 billion), only 24 schools offer P&O education at various levels and standards. These twenty four schools train less than 400 practitioners per year, while more than **75% of developing countries have no access to training programs.**

It is estimated that 40,000 trained professionals are needed immediately just for Africa, Asia and Latin America to provide P&O services to meet the today needs of people with disabilities and improve their daily life¹.



Student taking cast during a clinical seminar

¹ www.ispoint.org

Human Study e.V. evaluated that one trained graduate of its Blended Distance programs in P & O can deliver and/or support at least 100 services per year for People With Disability. This is why the organization continues its efforts in the P&O educational field and is extending its presence with a new Blended Distance Bachelor program for the East African Region, starting in September 2017.

CASE STUDY /// Milos Opacic & his patient Robert

Milos Opacic, BSc./Cat.I P&O, has completed the Human Study ISPO Cat.II program in 2012 and has now successfully graduated in February 2017 with the first group of students completing the Human Study Cat.II to Cat.I Upgrade Program.

From Croatia

Through the regular clinical workshops and seminars, our students have the opportunity to meet their fellow students from the region, but also from far away countries.

Here, our students have the chance to learn and apply contemporary methods of patient treatment, transferring their “lesson learned” into their regular patient care services on a day-to-day basis. Along their education, they are supported in dealing with the most difficult cases of patient treatment for patients. The experiences made with patients who have been faced with complex problems, sometimes not treated properly in the past, finally receive appropriate services enabling them to participate in daily activities and have a better quality of life.

One of such experiences is the story of Robert (43) from Croatia and his P&O practitioner, a Human Study BSc./Cat.I graduate, Milos Opacic from Rijeka in Croatia.

Here is how Milos Opacic describes his experience with Robert:

“When Robert first came to see me, he was a 39-year old man who could not move his body through an open door.... - he- could not walk longer than 20 meters, without feeling pain.” Up until his early teenage years Robert was just like the other boys his age, he could run, walk and jump, but then his condition worsened. The first signs of muscle weakening in his arms followed soon after, during Robert’s late teenage years.

“During the first five years of treatment, I was making modifications to Robert’s orthoses and shoes according to my best knowledge and skills. Robert could not extend his feet, did not have any base support for his body. His disease was progressing further.... and I decided then to enroll in the Human Study e.V. educational programs.”

The clinical seminars were taking place in Zagreb, Croatia. *“When I first told Robert about this opportunity, unsurprisingly, he was reluctant. Somehow I managed to convince him to accompany me to Zagreb. During the HS educational workshops, with the help of their internationally renowned lecturers I learned how to help Robert ... and now ... he is not only able to have a full-time job, a family and a normal life. Without problems, Robert can*

stand and walk for hours, relive the joys of life, which he feared were lost to him.” Over the years Milos and Robert have become close friends. “I am grateful that he gave me the opportunity to help him personally, but also to improve my skills and knowledge professionally. For I have learnt a great deal, not only about P&O, but also about the beauty of life.”



Robert with BSc/Cat.I graduate Milos and students testing the new orthoses during the Human Study clinical seminar

Robert has put his emotional experience, which he likes to call **'waves'** in this poetic letter:

“A conversation which changed the world, or worlds. A call made out of despair changed everything. “Robert, come. Let us give it a try. We have nothing to lose. We could at least make the effort”, said the voice at the other end of the line.

Robert is my name. I am 46 years old. The voice at the other end of the line was Milos Opacic, my P&O clinician. “If this does not prove better for you, we will make it the old way, then”, Milos Opacic said. That is how he convinced me.

The travelling was often strenuous. There was the energy consuming school of gait to be gone through. Travelling to Zagreb.

When I was a child I was diagnosed with Charcot–Marie–Tooth disease (CMT) and until the age of 16 I had lived without the help of any orthopaedic appliance. At that time, I came across the ankle-foot orthosis (AFO) which I used ever since.

Then, I met Milos, who not only instilled confidence in me, but also was the only person capable of comprehending my problems in dealing with the lack of understanding from my employer, my family and my family physician. Not to mention the problems I had with finding a girlfriend. I even quit thinking about girls. Bent in form of the letter 'G', looking like a bundle of rope, with pains in my feet, ankles,

knees, up to my head, with cramps in my muscles, tiring, inability to stretch my leg, psychological problems I cannot even describe, huge blisters on my atrophied leg. To cut the long story short, almost five years after I met him, Milos Opacic, or Mihajlo as I like to call him, is not only my orthotist, but also my friend.

My message to everyone would be: give it a try, you have nothing to lose. Today, I walk in the form of the letter 'I', thanks to the orthoses I acquired through the program of Human Study. Today, I have no problems with cramps, no pain in my bones, no back-pain, and no breathing difficulties. I do not have to be often absent from my job, as before. Today, I walk 5 kilometers in 20-30 minutes, while before I was literally not able to go to the toilet by myself.

Before this treatment, I was almost confined to my bed. My room was my world. Today, I work as a clerk and I have several hobbies. I even think about starting my own business, so strong I feel myself to be. I move the world towards the better.

*I am very grateful to everyone involved in the HUMAN STUDY educational project in which I participated as model patient. I am particularly indebted to Mihajlo (Milos Opacic) for his psychological support, Christian Schlierf for his help with the swimming pool, Bill Neumann for our conversations, and others that I cannot name all but I am indebted to them all. I would like to thank HUMAN STUDY for making this possible, the city of Munich for their hospitality which will always remain in my memory. My motto today is: give it a try, move, make an effort! Do not give up and you will see you can do it! This story might as well be read as an excerpt from my unpublished personal story that could be named: **Waves from the Best Patient.**"*

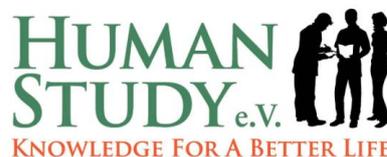
BASIC INFO /// LEARN MORE ABOUT HUMAN STUDY

Human Study can build on a specially developed vocational training model in blended learning education format. This model is currently being implemented in seven projects, including three programs for ISPO Category II in Tunisia, the Balkans, the Middle East and three projects for Bachelor Degree / ISPO Category I Upgrade Program in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Tunisia and Tanzania.

Contact the HUMAN STUDY team:

pr@human-study.org

www.human-study.org



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BASIC AND ADVANCED BLENDED LEARNING EDUCATION