

## ***Working in Bangladesh***

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I was fortunate to visit Bangladesh this past year and meet with numerous people and organizations focused on the disability/rehabilitation sector. Bangladesh is well served by local organizations, (BRAC), and international non-governmental organizations (CBM, Handicap International, ICRC SFD, Jaipur, etc).

BRAC, (formerly Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), is known to me from the P&O lab they set up in Haiti after the earthquake. It was very interesting to visit their center in Dhaka and hear about the rehab / disability situation. Most interesting to me is how they have a Physiatrist and Physiotherapist working directly with the P&O staff, mirroring what they did in Haiti. Also interesting, was the reason for their now-exclusive use of ICRC technology. When they first started P&O production many years ago patients were offered a Jaipur or an ICRC prosthesis, and according to BRAC, enough patients rejected the Jaipur, primarily because of the appearance, that BRAC was forced to abandon use of the Jaipur technology.

The Center for the Paralyzed (CRP) was the most inspiring (and sobering) part of the visit! Located on the outskirts of Dhaka, (and immediately adjacent to the site where over 1,000 garment factory workers were recently killed in a building collapse), it was founded by an English physiotherapist and is a comprehensive acute and long term care center, with 100 in-patient beds, numerous education programs, including a school starting for P&O training at ISPO Cat II level. The ICRC has hired Rowan English, (an Australian CPO and ISPO Education committee member), along with a graduate of the Cambodia P&O school, to help set up the program and then teach. A new building is under construction that will house the school, and increase capacity of the existing P&O lab. Interesting to me was that they have not decided what P&O training curriculum will be utilized. The ICRC has their own curriculum, Cambodia's P&O school has offered theirs, and Australia's Latrobe University has an ISPO Category II curriculum (where Rowan English taught). It was fascinating to discuss this issue, and after reflect on my involvement with the Haiti / Dominican Republic P&O training programs.

My takeaway for the US ISPO Board and membership is:

- Continued support is needed for international P&O education (and especially educator) development;
- Teaching opportunities are available and welcomed at CRP / ICRC rehab center;
- Bangladesh P&O is at an exciting transition point.

Fun fact: Bangladesh has 160 million people living on land the size of Iowa (water covers the remaining land).