

# MISSION REPORT

# SIERRA LEONE

## 19-23 FEBRUARY 2024



# Swiss<sup>+</sup>ABILITY

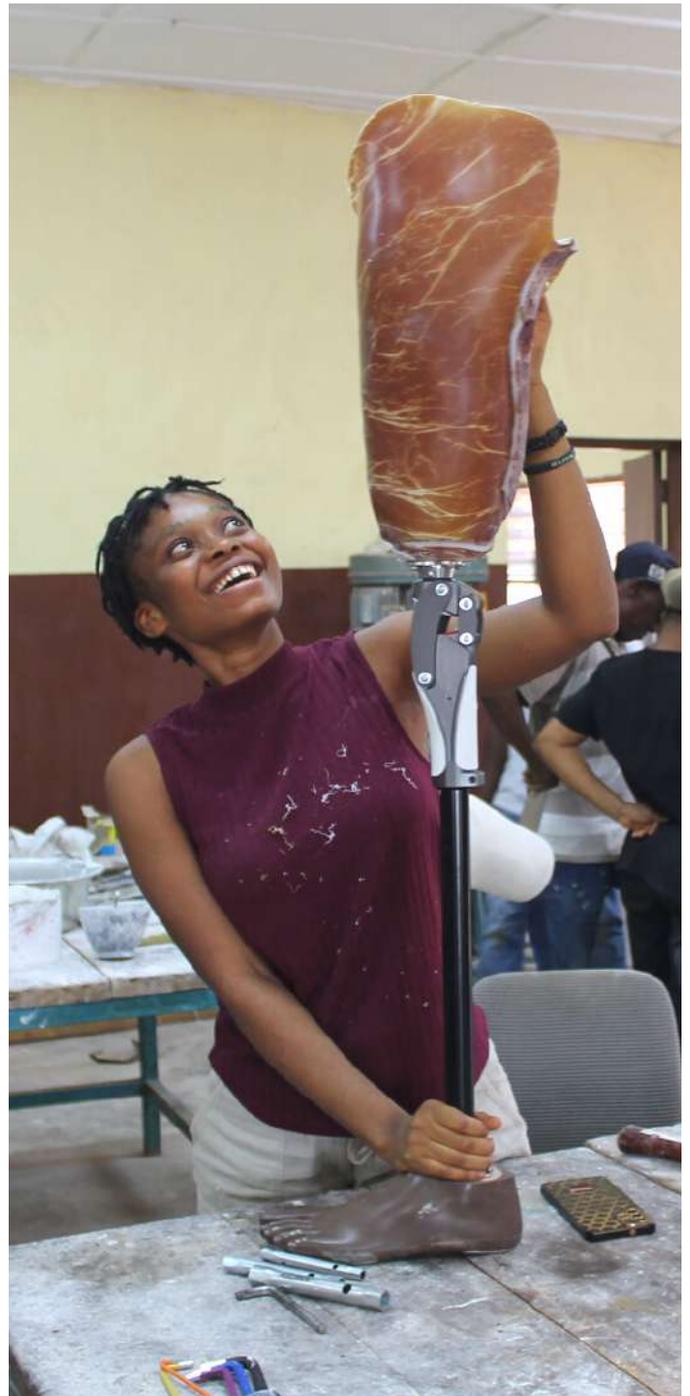
# WAR CAN TAKE A LEG BUT DOES NOT HAVE TO TAKE THE JOY OF LIVING

**SwissABILITY continues to operate throughout Sierra Leone annually to ensure stability for those who survived the war as well as for others with disabilities.**

It has been more than two decades since the devastating conflict ended in Sierra Leone. Its population remains deeply shaken and marked by the events and consequences of that period. Many people have experienced the tragedy of losing family and friends, but despite the despair, they have survived and better still, are able to see the brighter side of life.

During our stay in Freetown, we met many amputees who lost limbs due to accidents, illnesses, and the civil war. They shared with us the challenges of getting back on their feet, regaining their joy, and seeking the strength to move forward. SwissABILITY has provided each of them the opportunity to rise on stable legs and walk proudly and strongly towards a better future.

Throughout the week, with the experience and enthusiastic motivation of Nelson Mubiru, our training technician from Uganda, we successfully created 18 new prostheses and repaired two existing ones. The training involved 16 orthopedic technicians, including various students participating in the program supported by Human Study and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) in collaboration with the K. Lisa Yang Center for Bionics.



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# RECORD-BREAKING TRAINING

Due to the activities of SwissABILITY in Sierra Leone, 20 patients regained their mobility: 18 received new prostheses and two had their existing prostheses repaired. This achievement was made possible through the dedication of a large team of technicians and students who, with great determination, acquired new skills for the production of highly mobile and affordable prostheses. Each participant in the training devoted themselves to meet the needs of the patients who came to the orthopedic centre during the week.

The training took place at the National Rehabilitation Centre in Freetown, the country's main government rehabilitation center and was a collaboration with both the government of Sierra Leone, represented by Dr. Ismaila Kebbie, and the tireless efforts of Mambud Samai, coordinator of Single Leg Amputee Sport Association (SLASA). This association is of great value to the amputees of the country and strongly advocates for the importance of sports as a means to achieve social integration.



Once again this year, SwissABILITY's Vice President and orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Julian Lair, enriched the training program with a presentation on amputations from the surgeon's perspective. The discussion sparked much curiosity and keen interest among all the participating technicians and students.

The last day of training was a moment of great joy for everyone involved: the technicians successfully passed the final exam and received certificates attesting to their participation in SwissABILITY's training. Meanwhile, the patients received their new prostheses and together celebrated their ability to walk again.



# SLASA: THE ASSOCIATION THAT GIVES HOPE TO AMPUTEES ACROSS THE COUNTRY



Since the end of the civil war, SLASA has dedicated itself to the social and psychological rehabilitation of amputees who survived the conflict. With over 350 members, many of whom are active members who gather weekly for football matches, SLASA has become a symbol of resilience and community for amputees across the country.

However, SLASA is not just about sports. Mambud Samai, the founder of the association, has purchased a piece of land in the Port Loko District to initiate a sustainable agriculture project. Currently involved in the cultivation of fruits and vegetables, as well as raising goats and nearly a hundred chickens, the project has also started honey production with beehives set up within the compound. These activities empower amputees to feel actively engaged in society, fostering social interaction and collaboration with the entire community.



# TECHNICIANS AND STUDENTS JOINING FORCES TO REHABILITATE SIERRA LEONE



**NELSON MUBIRU**

Orthopedic technician and senior trainer

It was an honor to provide all the technicians with the opportunity to learn about the Monolimb and enable amputees to walk again. All the technicians were passionate and actively involved.



**ABDULRAHMAN DUMBUYA**  
NRC Freetown



**JAMES FOFANAH**  
NRC Freetown



**AIMRAN SESAY**  
NRC Freetown and MIT student



**MOMOH KONNEH**  
NRC Freetown and MIT student



**PRINCE KAILIE**  
Bo orthopedic centre



**ADAMA CONTEH**  
NRC Freetown and MIT student



**KHALIL MARRAH**  
NRC Freetown and MIT student



**ISATA LAMIN**  
NRC Freetown and MIT student



**PATRICK BANGURA**  
NRC Freetown and MIT student



**MOHAMED KOMBA**  
NRC Freetown and MIT student



**DOLORES SAMAI**  
NRC Freetown and MIT student



**ALHAJI BANGURA**  
Bo orthopedic centre and MIT student



**SHEKNEH DIKOR**  
Bo orthopedic centre and MIT student



**HAWANATU SILLAH**  
Bo orthopedic centre and MIT student



**ALBERT MOIBA**  
Bo orthopedic centre and MIT student



**BEATRICE MAMBU**  
Bo orthopedic centre and MIT student

# REGAINING INDEPENDENCE

## REV EVANS

60 years old, transtibial amputee due to the civil war



MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS

## SHEKNEH

39 years old, transfemoral amputee due to a road accident



TRANSFEMORAL PROSTHESIS

## BAINDU

35 years old, transtibial amputee due to the civil war



MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS



## THE STORY OF BEATRICE



MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS

Beatrice was victim of a road accident when she was only three years old. She was crossing the road when a car crushed her foot. In the hospital, they decided to amputate her leg below the knee, and after a year, she was already wearing her first prosthesis. In the initial years post-amputation, Handicap International provided her with prosthetics, but when the organization left the country, Beatrice was unable to afford a replacement. The previous artificial leg lasted for 4 years. Currently, she is a student in the MIT program at the orthopedic centre in Bo, and she is thrilled to learn a profession that will enable her to help all those children who, like her, are unable walk due to amputation.



## YANQUBA

27 years old, transfemoral amputee due to a road accident



TRANSFEMORAL PROSTHESIS

## ISHMAEL

19 years old, transtibial amputee due to a road accident



MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS

## YAYAH

15 years old, transtibial amputee due to an infection



MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS

**ABUBAKARR**

17 years old, transtibial amputee due to a road accident



**MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS**

**AMARA**

20 years old, transtibial amputee due to a congenital disease



**MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS**

**SHEKU**

26 years old, transtibial amputee due to the civil war



**MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS**



**THE STORY OF IBRAHIM**



**MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS**

Ibrahim is just 4 years old, a lively child full of energy who brings joy to everyone around him. Due to a congenital condition, he was born missing some fingers on his hands, a part of one leg, and with clubfoot on the other. Dr. Kebbie, the head of physical rehabilitation in Sierra Leone, met him and his mother as they were heading to the physiotherapy unit for one of the final treatments for his clubfoot. Dr. Kebbie invited them to come to the orthopedic centre to explore the possibility of receiving a prosthesis.

The trainer Nelson Mubiru was immediately enthusiastic and in just four hours he prepared an orthosis for his clubfoot and a new leg! Ibrahim had no hesitation in trying it on, and in no time, he could run and play with his friends.



**AMINATA**

18 years old, transfemoral amputee due to a serious fall



**TRANSFEMORAL PROSTHESIS**

**JULIUS**

11 years old, transfemoral amputee due to a road accident



**TRANSFEMORAL PROSTHESIS**

**AMODU**

38 years old, transtibial amputee due to the civil war



**MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS**

**ALIE**

37 years old, transtibial amputee due to the civil war



**MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS**

**HAWA**

27 years old, transtibial amputee due to the civil war



**MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS**

**JOE**

58 years old, transfemoral amputee due to a road accident



**TRANSFEMORAL PROSTHESIS IN PRODUCTION**



**THE STORY OF VANDI**



**"THROUGH KNEE" PROSTHESIS**

In 1993, when the conflict had been raging for two years, Vandi (then seventeen) witnessed rebels killing his parents.

Despite the trauma, he managed to escape, but rebels shot him during his flight, striking his leg. A few hours later Vandi was found by soldiers and taken to Kenema Hospital, where they decided to amputate his leg.

Rising again after so much pain was not easy, but today he can rely on the support of his wife and three children. He works as a decorator and painter, and with his new and first prosthesis, he can work with more agility and ease.



**SORIE**

22 years old, transtibial amputee due to a road accident



**REPAIR OF A MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS**

**KEWULAY**

15 years old, transtibial amputee due to the a road accident



**REPAIR OF A MONOLIMB PROSTHESIS**

# OUR MISSION TEAM



**ROBERTO AGOSTA**  
Executive Director



**JULIAN LAIR**  
Vice President



**ALESSANDRA ARIES**  
Program Manager



**NELSON MUBIRU**  
Orthopedic technician  
and trainer



## THANK YOU SO MUCH

to all donors and supporters who made  
this mission possible and contributed to restoring hope to the beneficiaries of orthopedic training