

UGANDA MISSION REPORT Gulu, 14-24 September 2016

IMPLEMENTOR : SwissLeg and Swisslimbs Association

DONOR : AVSI Foundation Uganda – The TFV

PARTNER : Ministry of Health, Uganda

LOCATION : Gulu Regional Orthopedic Workshop (GROW) at the Gulu Regional Referral Hospital, Gulu, Acholi Region, Northern Uganda

TRAINED 6 Orthopedic Technicians

RESTORED mobility to 13 Satisfied Amputees

LAUNCHED SwissLeg Innovative Technology in Uganda

The objective of the mission was to introduce SwissLeg Mono-limb technology to the Orthopaedic Centre at the Gulu Regional Hospital, Uganda's principle rehabilitation centre. The centre serves amputees caused principally by the 18 year long civil war and road accident victims. It is expected to become a reference point for the growing refugee crisis from neighbouring South Sudan, only 80 km away.

SwissLeg project was backed by SwissLimbs (the partnering NGO) in partnership with the AVSI Foundation operating in 6 provinces in the country. This was the first of a series of technical enhancement training mission that aims at equipping all the Orthopaedic professionals in the nation.





A ceremony of the Launch of the SwissLeg Technology was officiated at GROW on Friday 24th September 2016. Representatives from the Ministry of Health (with whom SwissLimbs is discussing a Memorandum of Understanding for future collaborations) gave their praises to the success of the mission, along with AVSI Foundation, the Trust Fund for Victims and the media.

THE TEAM



Bernardo Gomes,
Certified Ortho-Prosthetist, Trainer

Filippo Nishino,
President SwissLimbs

Roberto Agosta,
CEO SwissLeg

TRAINING SESSIONS

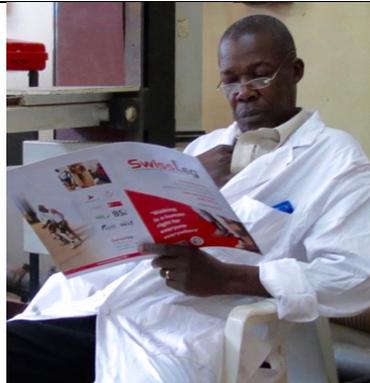


6 technicians received an intensive 10-day training and were awarded with a matching certificate from SwissLeg-Swisslimbs. 13 patients have been fitted with the SwissLeg Monolimb technology and are now walking with their new legs.

TRAINEES



Emmanuel Kalanzi, 69 (38 years experience)



David Muzira, 54 (27 years experience)



Augustine Mindra, 39 (14 years experience)



Andrew Obita Okeny, 39 (11 years experience)



Zakary Azuruku, 31 (5 years experience)



Bob Henry Obala, 22 (shoemaker 2 years experience)

BENEFICIARIES



1. Patrick Odong, 40, landmine victim



2. Joseph Ssempijja, 48, road traffic accident



3. Irene Laker, 37, landmine victim



4. Nancy Ageno, 30, landmine victim



5. Bob Henry Obala, 22, landmine victim



6. Simon Oringa
26, landmine victim



7. Angelina Acayo, 80, landmine victim



8. Minallah Omony, 30, accident



9. Richard Ongom 43, landmine victim



10. Patrick Kitara, 52, landmine victim



11. John Otim 30, landmine victim



12. Lillian Achan 46, landmine victim



13. Ben Buga 52, landmine victim



Celebration at the "launch" of the SwissLeg Tech

MANUFACTURING PICS



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AVSI
People for development



Fonds au Profit des Victimes
The Trust Fund for Victims



SwissLeg - technological innovation to provide affordable artificial limbs

AVSI Foundation in collaboration with SwissLeg will on Friday, September 23rd 2016 demonstrate the use of a new technology which offers affordable, functional and durable artificial limbs to persons in need of prosthesis legs. Currently materials to produce prostheses are imported from Switzerland and Germany. This is costly and time consuming and yet wear and tear increases over the years. Most of the Persons With Disabilities (PWD) with prosthesis live in rural areas and are engaged in agriculture. Their limbs require maintenance annually, and every 6 months for children.

With funding from the Trust Fund for Victims, AVSI has invited the SwissLeg, a not-for-profit company which aims to provide more affordable and sustainable solutions to limbs production, to train orthopaedic staff in the new technology. Existing machines at the Gulu Regional Orthopaedic Workshop (GROW) in Gulu District are used to manufacture trans-tibial prosthetics.

TESTIMONIAL - Lilly Achan. 46 years old from Gulu, Uganda.



Lilly receiving her SwissLeg, with Zachary an orthopaedic technician at Gulu Hospital, Uganda

Lilly has children; 2 daughters ages, 28 and 3 and 2 sons ages 25 and 14. She also has a 5 year old grandson.

***“The day I lost my leg was the day my husband left me.
He said that I was no longer worthy of him.”***

Before the explosion that took my leg, the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) had infiltrated our village and made themselves at home in my courtyard. The Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF) soldiers were approaching and forced the LRA to retreat into the bush, they planted landmines as they fled.

I was last of 6 women on the way home after a day’s work in the fields. It was already dark and as I stepped on a landmine, I heard a noise and then the blast. My 5 friends fled in fear and left me laying there, bleeding, fully conscious and in terrible pain. I battled death until the next morning when they came to rescue me.

The Red Cross ambulance took me to the Gulu Regional Referral Hospital where I finally lost my consciousness. When I woke up I realized my leg was cut off and my immediate thought was: 'How will I now work to feed my children? Without a leg, I cannot live.'

But after I was fitted with a prosthetic leg, I slowly started to walk again and managed to put my life back together and resume work. I am land mine survivor, I have been abandoned by my first husband, I am a widow from my second, but I am grateful to God that I am alive and could take care of my 4 children.

When I received the new leg (SwissLeg) I couldn’t believe how light it was. I walk so much easier with it, especially because I must walk long distances, it is less tiring.

TESTIMONIAL - John Otim 30 years old from Agago district in Northern Uganda.



It took John half a day travel to reach the hospital on his motorbike from another district but the distance did not bother him, he was just so excited to get a new leg. His wife Alice stayed home with their 2 year old daughter and 4 year old son.

John is a plumber but supplements his income between contracts as a 'Boda Boda' driver. A Boda-boda driver is a colloquial term for motorbike taxi driver, derived from the practise of paying for a lift on a motorbike across no mans land at the boarder.

“I was walking around our courtyard at home when I stepped on something unfamiliar. When I tried to check what it was - boom! it exploded. I regained consciousness hours later in the hospital and was told it was my father who transported me a long distance on his bicycle to the nearest medical center.

My immediate reaction was to try to get out of bed, but my leg felt strangely light. When I looked down and saw it was missing I suddenly started feeling a lot of pain. I cried, partly because of the pain but also because I realized I could not walk anymore. After 2 months at the hospital I was sent home with a pair of crutches. The kids in school teased me because of my missing limb.

2 years later an AVSI worker told me that I could get an artificial leg and took me to the Gulu Regional Referral hospital. I was so happy, I could walk again!

Now I have received a brand new (Swiss) leg! It's so much nicer then the previous one, and because it is lighter everything is much easier: walking, riding my bike and working. I could even choose my favourite decoration, and I think it looks great. I want to thank SwissLeg and AVSI for giving me this wonderful gift.”

TESTIMONIAL - Bob Henry Obala - 22 year old shoemaker from Kole District, Uganda



I am 22 years old and the second child of 8 siblings. My youngest brother is 4 years old. I am married to Mercy and we have an 8 months old son. He is a real rascal and we love him very much.

I was only 2 years old when my leg was blown off by a landmine. I have no recollection of what happened and my parents never told me about the accident. They believed that it would have been better not to paint such a traumatic picture in my young mind. So the only thing I know is that the landmine was planted on the path between our home and garden.

Even as an amputee without prosthesis I always tried my best to work and help my family earn a living. I could shepherd the family goats, work on the fields and I got skilled in making wicker furniture, I would do anything, but not beg!

Then, in 2007, at age 13 I received the donation of my first leg at Kumi District Orthopedic workshop. Until then I just used a walking stick, I didn't even have enough money to buy a crutch.

Upon completion of my primary school education I stayed home to support my family while I saved up enough money to pursue further studies.

Our district official introduced me to the shoe making profession which sounded really appealing to me, so I applied to do the Orthopedic Shoemaking School in Entebbe. I was afraid of telling my parents because I knew they would have discouraged me; my leaving was going to be very cumbersome on the family, but I knew, this is what I needed to do.

After my studies I was called in by the Gulu Regional Orthopedic Workshop for a 3 month replacement job. Afterwards I was called in by AVSI for a permanent job. I was extremely happy, because this meant that I could now start my own life, keep helping my family and get married.

My first leg was a Jaipur foot leg, it kept it for 7 years. It wasn't great, I had to wear it with straps or it would fall and I was a bit ashamed of it because it was pink colour and my school mates were teasing me saying: "look, he's wearing a muzungo's (white man) leg!"

In 2014 I got my second leg, it's an ICRC technology prosthesis, it was a bit better but now my stump has changed and I need to get a new one because every time I have to apply 7 socks to keep it up.

Now, SwissLeg made a new leg for me! It not only fits well but also looks perfect! The technician made a cosmetic finishing and the artificial leg look just like my real one. It's hard to tell that I am an amputee now.