

## **Echoes of Hope: Saisa's Journey to Inclusive Education**



The resounding clink of metal upon concrete announced Saisa Salemani's approach towards the head teacher's office, where the LWF Inclusive Education Assessor Lauren Lawi Anyango awaited, bearing a gift that would ease the young girl's daily struggles at school.

Saisa, a grade 5 learner, had her left leg amputated after an injury when she was young and now relies on a prosthetic leg for mobility, supplemented by crutches due to her body's limitations. However, her current crutches had weathered countless miles, their rubber soles worn to the bone, leaving Saisa in discomfort with each noisy step.

Before finding sanctuary at Angelina Jolie Girls Boarding Primary School, Saisa's life was one with many challenges, her access to safe and quality education was almost out of reach. It was a community mobilizer who first identified Saisa's potential and encouraged her family to seek assistance at the Educational Assessment and Resource Center (EARC).

In Kakuma, ensuring every refugee child, especially those with disabilities receives an education that embraces inclusivity and protection is a cornerstone of LWF's mission. Through diligent fieldwork, Community Mobilisers identify children like Saisa, ushering them to the Educational Assessment Resource Centre for assessment and intervention. EARC is an establishment managed by LWF and supported by our partners (Waldorf and Humanity & Inclusion) through donor funding; The center is equipped with devices for conducting assessments and screening to guide in the school placement and referrals for children with disabilities.



This was the same case for Saisa. The young South Sudanese girl visited EARC, underwent a comprehensive educational assessment, and was recommended for necessary interventions, including the provision of assistive devices (crutches and prosthetic leg) and a referral to a partner organization, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), for physiotherapy sessions.

With this support, Saisa was initially enrolled at Horseed Primary School. However, the long commute she faced during the rainy season and the stigmatization from peers made it difficult for her to attend classes regularly. Recognizing the need for a more inclusive and accessible learning environment, the school administration transferred her to Angelina Jolie Girls Boarding School, where she could thrive due to the barrier-free environment.

Today, LWF's support manifested in the form of new, adjustable crutches, fitted with rubber to soften their impact on the ground. Saisa's elation was palpable as she embraced her newfound mobility, her smile a testament to the transformative power of such seemingly simple gestures.

"I'd like to fly planes when I grow up"

Amidst conversations with Lauren, Saisa revealed her aspirations of becoming a pilot—a testament to her resilience and determination to defy the odds stacked against her. As

they talked, Saisa also shared snippets of her daily life at the school, including her favorite meal being rice and beans, except Mondays when rice and beef are served for supper.

LWF's impact extends far beyond individual stories like Saisa's, made possible through collaborative efforts with donors like UNHCR, ECHO, and Radio AID, ensuring that basic needs are met for both refugees and the host community, fostering hope and opportunity in the face of adversity.