

South African Mobility for the Blind Trust



Living
with
Blindness

ANNUAL REVIEW 2017





COVER PHOTO: Ntombifuthi (centre) with her daughter, Lebo (right) and her niece and her baby at home. Read their story on page 3.

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Blindness – the Bigger Picture

I am delighted to be able to report once again, on the activities of SAMBT in the past year. In this report, I focus specifically on the effect of blindness beyond the blind person. The truth is, that if one family member becomes blind, the whole family, as well as the friends, neighbours and even employers of that person, are affected and experience feelings of stress and distress.

I have seen, for example, the twelve year old daughter of a blind father, who was his sole carer, cooking and cleaning and washing for him in their shack after school and taking him to places he needed to go. How this might have affected her schoolwork, I don't know.

The big truth is, however, that Independence Training – the solution – is a solution for the family as well. I want us to keep this in mind as I report here on what we have achieved over this last financial year. To help us do that, let us take a look at Ntombifuthi, whom we trained last year, and some of her family.



Ntombifuthi (far bottom left) and her colleagues at a self-help group for the blind in Katshehlo. Ian Hutton (next to her) and her trainer Thabelo Muofhe (far right) joined the group for this picture.

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Ntombifuthi's story

So here she is then, about to begin one of her final lessons with Thabelo, our trainer. She tells it like this:

"There by 2014, I was crying and crying because Now I am blind. And with my husband it not easy. Tomorrow morning I'm think, when I wake up I will see again. But no. So I sit at house, just sit. My mind is blind also. I am 40 then. We just sit. Now I do many things in my life. Now I learn to walk by myself and make my tea, make bread. Before I just waiting for someone to ask 'You hungry?' Now I learn everything."

Two months it has taken Ntombifuthi to learn to walk confidently and safely with her white cane. Now, she will overcome the final challenge in her quest to get herself home from the house where her self-help group meets. That final challenge is to catch a minibus taxi and to do this in both directions.

And so, Ntombifuthi heads off determinedly, past a fruit seller, along cracked pavements towards the main road where the minibus taxis run. Meanwhile, Ntombifuthi's daughter, Lebo, waits anxiously at home to see if her mother will make it there with the taxi and without her help. And now, here Lebo stands tall, full of smiles and overflowing with pride for that mother of hers as she arrives safely and quietly triumphant at their gate.

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Ntombifuthi catching a taxi with her trainer, Thabelo Muofhe observing in the background.



3.

2.

What have we done this past year?

My aim here is to highlight our main achievements in a succinct way and to give a picture of what our work is about. We will look at the two chief aspects of our operation: our training programmes and our advocacy work. I will report on the crucial area of funding and also touch on staffing matters and meetings attended. Finally, I will give an outline of our plans for this year.



Since SAMBT fixed the path to his outside toilet and put up stakes and a rope as a guide, Stephen can now go alone. Here Kidibone is helping him try out the path on his own for the first time.

The Training Programmes

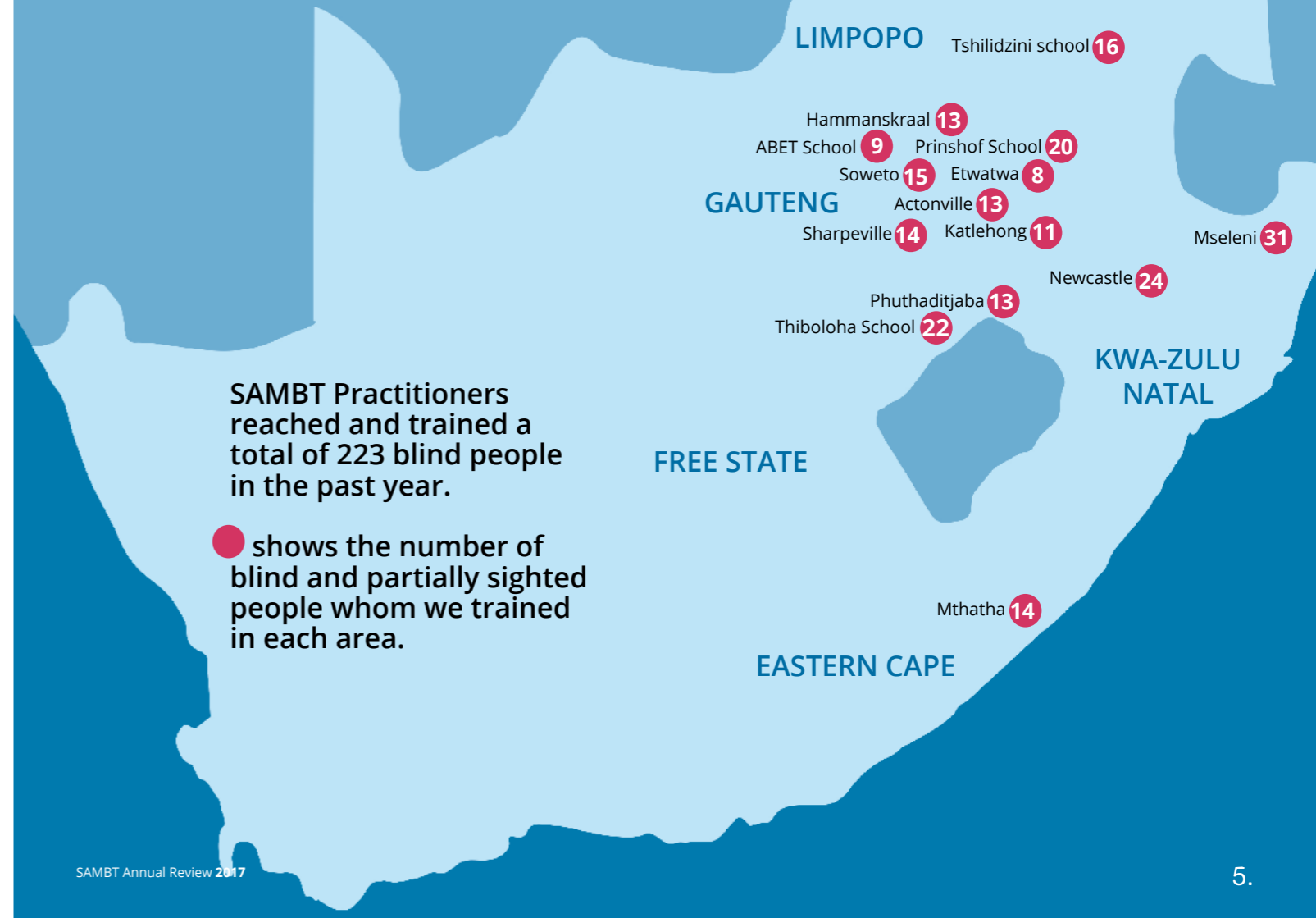
Our Practitioners ran a total of 16 training programmes during this past year. Each of them spent an average of twelve weeks in the various areas that we covered. Their work spanned five provinces: Gauteng, Limpopo, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape.

Three of the programmes were at schools for the blind. The rest were community-based. These ranged from those in deeply rural places like Mseleni in northern KZN to those in urban townships such as Soweto and Katlehong – as well as everything in between.

Through this, our Practitioners reached a total of 223 blind people and trained them in white cane and orientation techniques as well as in a number of other independence skills. See the map on page 5 for details.

SAMBT Practitioners reached and trained a total of 223 blind people in the past year.

● shows the number of blind and partially sighted people whom we trained in each area.





Vilakazi with his certificate stating that he successfully completed his Independence Training Programme. He asked us for it so that he can prove to his employers that he would not be a burden to them.

The People Behind the Statistics

To get an idea of how the training changed the lives of those blind people, let's take a look at a real life example from Phuthaditjhaba in the Free State where we ran one of our programmes. After we had finished that programme I visited the area.

First we met Vilakazi. Vilakazi is called by his surname, it seems. He works for the Phuthaditjhaba Municipality – at their disability desk.

That is remarkable in itself when you think that well over 90% of blind people in South Africa are unemployed. Vilakazi, who is in his early thirties, gave us a brilliant demonstration of how well their money had been spent. He made his way with his white cane from the municipal offices to the spot where he catches a minibus taxi home each day: a short route but fraught with obstacles – street hawker stands; cars parked across the narrow pavement; raised manhole covers; puddles in pavement potholes: you name it. And he did it with confidence, dignity and a small smile on his face.

Those words of Vilakazi show us the positive effect of Independence Training on people other than just the blind person – in this case, a potential employer. Besides that, Vilakazi told us of a white cane rally that he and others were organising for Disability Awareness Day which would see a whole lot of them demonstrating their mobility skills to the public. And so the ripple effect goes on.

The Magic Ingredients

When we look at stories like this and many others, we should not lose sight of the emotional effect of Independence Training on a blind person. This is about one's self-confidence and self-esteem being restored – “the magic ingredients” as our trainer, Bongani, describes it.

The Money Point of View

It may be worth noting here that there can sometimes be financial benefits for the family because of Independence Training. In some cases, they might have employed someone to help care for their blind family member. They will no longer have that expense. Often though, it is a family member who does the caring. That person will now be free to find employment and add to the family's income. That is a general statement. But we did have a small analysis done for us on what the business people call Return On Investment (ROI). That means, if

you measure the effect of Independence Training on the family in money terms, what do you get back from what you put in? Our corporate funders may like to know this and you might be interested too.

Let's say that Bheki has been in a car accident and lost his sight. His sister, Mbali has to stay at home now to look after him – make him food; do his washing, ironing and cleaning; take him where he needs to go – because they are poor and can't afford to employ someone to do it.



Bongani's client Maria is gaining confidence walking with her white cane.



Kidibone and a young learner from Phuthadijhaba.

Boniswa is learning to know the difference between coins.



But now Mbali doesn't need to do that anymore because her brother can do it for himself. So now, she can go out and look for a job. She finds one. It's domestic work at a below minimum wage of R1 500 a month. After just two years of doing that, Mbali will have brought in almost twice the amount of money that it cost to train her brother – R18 000. And Bheki's training took only three months. This is a Return On Investment of 180%.

If you extrapolate the figures – we have trained 223 blind people over the last financial year – if we generalise our calculation, our Orientation and Mobility Training allows 223 family members to go back to work, and it allows each of those families to generate at least R18 000 of income for their families on an annual basis.

And if that's not a good investment, then what is?

Training Statistics

Finally, we come to the statistics of the people we have trained. And these are important too. As I have already mentioned, we trained 223 blind people over the last financial year. But there are a few things that I would like to note: Firstly, these are all people who would otherwise not have been able to get Independence Training. Secondly, if you consider the number of family members who have benefitted as well – taking an estimate of four per blind person – about 1 000 people in total have benefitted in one year alone. Finally, if you were to look back to when we began in 1998, you will see that we have trained close to 4 000 blind people. If you add their family members to that, we are talking about a total of twenty-thousand people whose lives we have helped change.

I am both humbled and proud when I look at it like that.

Advocacy

In short, the majority of blind people in South Africa cannot get Orientation and Mobility Training and the other independence skills that go with it. This includes our children at schools for the blind. NGOs alone are not able to meet the need in this country.

A solution is for the government to become a major employer of Orientation and Mobility Practitioners. The particular Departments concerned are those of Basic Education and Health. But those Departments cannot employ O&M Practitioners at the moment because, for them to employ any professional, they must be registered with a recognised body. And, right now, O&M Practitioners are not registered.

SAMBT has played a crucial role in the formation of OMAG – the O&M Action Group. As part of this group we are working towards getting O&M practitioners registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). The next step will be to get government departments to establish O&M training positions within their structures, so that blind people all over South African can receive the training they need to become independent and to regain their confidence and self-esteem. Estimations of the number of blind people in South Africa differ widely and vary from 400 000 - 700 000. If you think that since our inception

SAMBT has trained 4 000 people you can clearly understand the need for an official government roll out of support to this sector of society.

For more information about our work as OMAG, please contact me on 011-648 9035.



Bongani with two clients.

Fundraising

To our donors: You are the backbone of our work. Without you, we would not have achieved what we did.

The proof of that is not just in this report but out there in the places where we worked. It is also in our financial statements. I must thank you all on behalf of SAMBT and on behalf of the blind people whose lives you uplifted. And we must understand this too. For the Ntombifuthis and the Vilakazis and the Thembis of this world, it is also about knowing that somebody cares.

During the year under review, we had a total of 30 donations from trusts, corporates and the Gauteng Department of Health. We also received gifts from private donors, both locally and from the United States. We managed to spread our donor base somewhat, rather than rely too heavily on a few major supporters. We did this by bringing in some new partners. Also, some of our more regular supporters increased what they gave us, compared with previous years.

Here, I would also like to make mention of the John and Esther Ellerman Memorial Trust. They are our longest standing supporter. They have been with us since our inception in 1998.



We used this cartoon on our Facebook page.

Despite the good results over the year, it was, of course, not all smooth sailing. In particular, there was a long procedural delay in the release of the Gauteng Department of Health's funding.

They are currently our largest single donor. But, in the end, and much to our relief, the funds came through. Because of this, we were a little diverted from our plan to raise the extra funds we need for our advocacy work in the coming financial year. This we will rectify.

Our efforts to enter the digital fundraising world are carrying on. This is a gradual process of building up the necessary knowhow. It is very different from conventional ways of fundraising. But slowly, we are getting there...



Our team of dedicated trainers, from left to right, Thabelo Muofhe, Nnyana Mokale and Kidibone Setlhabe and at back, Bongani Maleka.

The team

We employed four Orientation and Mobility Trainers, all of whom lived and worked away from home for extended periods of time to take Independence training to blind people who would otherwise not have had any access to it. It is because of their dedication and sacrifice that we are the organisation that we are.

Thank-you Nnyana, Bongani, Thabelo and Kidibone.



Our plans for the upcoming year

We plan on running 17 training programmes during 2016/17. These will cover five provinces and include two schools. Except for some of the Gauteng programmes, we have identified all the areas where our community programmes will be run.

At some point, we will be considering taking on a fifth trainer. If we do, we will adjust our schedule of training programmes and budget accordingly. We will also be looking hard at our options in our advocacy work. The registration of Practitioners with the HPCSA is particularly crucial.

Conclusion

2016/17 has been a good year. We ran a successful operation and dealt with unforeseen events. We upheld the spirit of our organisation and its ethics. Most of all, we changed the lives of many blind people and, of course, their families. None of this would have been possible without your support! We thank you all – donors, board members, staff and other supporters.

Ian Hutton



Audited Financial Statements

SOUTH AFRICAN MOBILITY FOR THE BLIND TRUST

TRUST NUMBER IT 10593/97

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL
POSITION AT 31 MARCH 2017

	Note	2017 R	2016 R
ASSETS		3 105 752	1 915 698
Non current assets		59 848	111 990
Equipment	2	59 848	111 990
Current assets		3 045 904	1 803 708
Accounts receivable	3	1 800	1 800
Accrued income	4	-	87 054
Cash and cash equivalents	5	2 940 042	1 619 230
Inventories	6	104 062	95 624
Total assets		3 105 752	1 915 698
RESERVES AND LIABILITIES		3 105 752	1 915 698
Reserves		1 928 000	1 600 311
Trust capital		100	100
Accumulated surplus		868 052	588 221
Sustainability reserve	7	1 000 000	900 000
Equipment fund		59 848	111 990
Current liabilities		1 177 752	315 387
Accounts payable	8	11 325	43 996
Deferred income	9	1 144 684	243 008
Provision for leave pay	10	21 743	28 383
Total reserves and liabilities		3 105 752	1 915 698

	Note	2017 R	2016 R Restated*
INCOME		3 276 543	3 033 128
Grants, subsidies and donations	11	3 140 242	2 932 303
Profit on disposal of assets		15 000	-
Interest received	12	121 301	100 825
EXPENDITURE		2 948 854	2 905 853
Accounting fees		55 180	59 450
Advocacy		166 974	143 690
Auditors' remuneration		50 886	50 910
Bank charges	13	8 412	7 180
Cleaning		5 301	10 095
Computer expenses		56 785	23 663
Conference and meetings		6 800	21 104
Depreciation		69 242	99 358
Fundraising costs		7 000	10 500
General expenses		230	400
Insurance		55 069	60 064
Marketing and public relations		274 861	159 123
Motor vehicle expenses		184 291	181 216
Postage		12 685	10 670
Printing and stationery		25 889	26 723
Rent, water and electricity		82 794	87 311
Repairs and maintenance		385	-
Salaries and contributions		1 597 182	1 642 096
Security		14 882	10 797
Staff development and training		15 260	13 205
Telephone and internet		40 007	53 753
Training equipment		120 446	125 218
Travel and accommodation		98 293	109 327
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		327 689	127 275
* Refer to note 17			

SOUTH AFRICAN MOBILITY FOR THE BLIND TRUST

TRUST NUMBER IT 10593/97

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE
INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31
MARCH 2017

SOUTH AFRICAN MOBILITY FOR THE BLIND TRUST

TRUST NUMBER IT 10593/97

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2017

	Note	2017 R	2016 R
Cash received from funders		4 128 972	2 509 358
Cash expended on programmes, suppliers and employees		(2 927 361)	(2 844 558)
Cash generated from/(utilised in) operations	15	1 201 611	(335 200)
Interest received	12	121 301	100 825
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities		1 322 912	(234 375)
Cash flows generated from/(utilised in) investing activities		(2 100)	-
Acquisition of equipment		(17 100)	-
Proceeds from disposal of motor vehicle		15 000	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		1 320 812	(234 375)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1 619 230	1 853 605
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	5	2 940 042	1 619 230



**Thank You to
Our Donors!**

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NPO Registration no.: 007-220 NPO

PBO: 18/11/13/1400

You can also find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SAMBTZA/>

www.sambt.org.za

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Banking details, South Africa: Nedbank, Eastgate Branch

Account number: 1924260212

Branch Code: 192405

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<https://kbfus.networkforgood.com/projects/13797-s-kbfus-funds-south-african-mobility-for-the-blind-trust-za>