

When Your Whole World Changes

South African Mobility for the Blind Trust Annual Review 2021



CONTENTS

3	When Your Whole World Changes
4	Coping with Covid
6	What Have we Done This Past Year?
8	Dignity Regained
10	How to Iron a Shirt
12	Mamokethi's Baking
13	The Heroes of Our Work
14	How do we Monitor Our Training
15	Partnership & Advocacy
16	Who Did we Train this Past Year?
17	Thank You to Our Donors
18	SAMBT, the first 23 Years
22	Handover Report by Ian Hutton
23	Plans for the Year Ahead
24	Audited Financial Statements
27	Contact details



Before lunch, Kabo can wash his hands by himself.

When Your Whole World Changes

Though this may sound like the title of a new blockbuster movie, it has been our reality in the last 18 months. We all find ourselves cast as characters in this real-life drama.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought with it despair and loss. It brought loss of loved ones, of jobs, of income, loss of ...

Now imagine the effect that Covid-19 has had on the lives of blind people whose hands are their eyes through touch. How do blind people practise social distancing when they are unable to get around on their own? A blind person is taught to hold on to someone's elbow, and holding on exactly there where we are taught to sneeze and cough.

This makes a blind person especially vulnerable to contracting Covid-19. And furthermore, how does a blind person do shopping without feeling items?

It has been said that the elderly and those with comorbidities are most at risk of contracting the virus.

As a blind person myself, I know that the risk that Covid-19 poses to blind people is enormous! In addition to the challenges blind people faced pre-Covid-19, the new normal brought daunting new challenges.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Parishna' followed by a stylized surname.

Parishna Ramluckan
Managing Trustee

Coping with Covid-19



Covid temperature check before training.

At the end of March 2020, as Level 5 lockdown was imposed, our work at SAMBT initially came to a halt. Our practitioners stayed at home. Moira, our monitoring expert, created opportunities for professional development: discussions, training videos, practitioners made tactile maps, and they contacted previous clients to offer support and training by phone.

During these two months, our Johannesburg team rallied to make new plans, and with advice from friends and advisors, we drew up a Covid-19 protocol for each of our practitioners, gave them official travel documentation, and sourced PPE that we sent to everyone at the end of May. As soon as restrictions were lifted late in May 2020, our SAMBT practitioners - the heroes of our work - were back in the field: they were able to train from their home areas, which were low infection areas at the time.

Thank you to our outgoing Managing Trustee, Ian, for his leadership during this year, for staying calm in the storm, as we considered scenario upon scenario.



Community Awareness day in Zeerust.

What Have we Done This Past Year?



We had originally scheduled 18 training programmes for this financial year under review. After almost two months when we were unable to train, we started back in the field in the last days of May. We had had to re-imagine our whole programme schedule.

We were able to retain our plan of running 18 programmes. We did this by shortening programmes that ran until December, so they ran over 9 weeks, instead of the usual 11-12 weeks. We also encouraged our practitioners to train fewer clients per programme so each client could get enough lessons per week to still reach their goals. This also reduced the number of people our practitioners had contact with and, therefore, the risk of infection.

We also changed where we ran some of our programmes. Initially, programmes had to be in practitioners' home areas; they had already travelled home shortly before Lockdown Level 5 and there were travel restrictions between provinces. Living at home while they ran those first programmes was the only practical and safe option.

We also changed the location of some of our programmes because significant funding came in for training young people: we included more programmes at high schools, colleges and ABET Centres.

The programmes ran as planned, although our Christiana programme had to be interrupted due to high infection numbers. The Kuruman programme, which was interrupted in March 2020, was completed in February 2021.



○ Shows the number of people whom we trained in each area.

Dignity Regained

James Mokabane is a pensioner. His rural home is outside Mahikeng in North West Province. James is blind. Kidibone is teaching him. She is teaching him how to use a white cane. This is how she tells it.

“When I landed at James’s place two weeks ago, he already knew about me from my previous clients, and he told me, ‘I am in desperate need of the training.’”

Kidi relates how she began by explaining to James the COVID-19 protocol and the strict rules she would follow every time she came to train him. She explained about taking

his temperature, giving him a mask for every lesson and hand sanitising etc. But James could barely contain his impatience. He wanted to begin his training right away.

“I can’t wait any longer,” he urged. “My training,” he told Kidi, “has been delayed since May because of the lockdown.”

The first thing James wanted to learn was how to get from his house to the outside toilet on his own. But at first sight, the area outside James’s home was a real problem for Kidi. Between his house and the toilet was a big open space, with the swept earth

of a rural North West homestead. It was just too large for James to find his way across to the toilet at the other end without getting lost.

But then, Kidi saw a pile of unused bricks in the yard. This reminded her of a previous client in Sharpeville. There, our monitoring expert, Moira, had strung up a rope as a guide to that client’s outside toilet. Seeing those bricks gave Kidi an idea: she started laying out a path between James’ home and the toilet ... one brick at a time. Kidi, the brick layer, had solved the problem. But that’s not where it ends.

James is now learning to find his own way to his local tuckshop and to the clinic. And he is relishing it.

Soon, he will be cooking himself a meal with what he has bought at the tuckshop or pouring himself a cup of tea. He will also know that he has the right change from the tuckshop because he has learned which banknote is which, and the same with the different coins.

What Kidi is teaching James is called Independence Training. That is his right. But James also has a right to life. That is what this training is giving him too.

Dignity, though, is what gives life meaning.

For James, this began with getting to his outside toilet by himself.



How to Iron a Shirt



Mphonyana lives in Monsterlus, Limpopo. He wanted to learn to iron, and this by phone! He is a student at the ABET Centre at Bosele School for the Blind in Limpopo. This is where our Thabelo trained Mphonyana before Covid-19. During lockdown, the centre was closed.

When Thabelo called Mphonyana to hear how he was getting on during lockdown, he asked her if she could please give him a phone lesson to learn how to iron his clothes.

Says Thabelo:

“My first step was for Mphonyana to get a friend he can trust and who could do the lessons together.

“And so, after a week or so, with this sighted friend’s help, with the cell phone on speaker phone, we started.

“Mphonyana first learnt to fill the iron with water; how to make sure the plug stays dry; how to lay the towels out on the table that he uses as iron board; next knowing the position of the cable. He learnt to set the iron on the correct temperature.”

With Thabelo’s help, they attached a tactile piece of tape indicating the correct temperature setting.

Says Thabelo, “Mphonyana is now able to not burn his clothes”.

Training a client how to iron by phone, is certainly new for

Thabelo. She was amazed with Mphonyana’s progress.

Here is how Thabelo explained the gist of the lesson:

“Iron in the right hand; sighted friend’s right hand over his friend’s right hand on the iron; left hand feels where the T-shirt is. Moving along, the left hand makes sure the T-shirt is lying flat. Mphonyana needs to learn for his two hands to work together, the iron following the left hand which is smoothing the T-shirt. Also, the left hand can feel where it is warm, since those areas would have been ironed already.”



Mamokethi's Baking



Imagine being blind, wanting to bake your child's birthday cake, just like you used to do before you lost your sight.

But how will you learn to trust yourself to set the oven at the correct temperature? How will you trust yourself that the oven racks are in the correct positions and that you will not burn yourself when you put the pans in the oven? Or how will you test if the cake is ready, let alone remove the pans from the oven without getting burnt? Perhaps you would end up greasing the pan, getting the batter all

ready, but then having to ask someone to put the pans in the oven for you and remove the cake from the oven once it is ready.

This is what Mamokethi who lives in Koppies, in Free State used to do. So, when our practitioner Thabang trained her, Mamokethi wanted to learn to cook and bake by herself .

Thanks to Thabang's systematic training, Mamokethi can, once again, confidently bake her children's birthday cakes and prepare a family meal.

Our thanks go to
our five practitioners,
the heroes of our work!



Thabelo Muofhe



Thabang Kotsi



Joyce Thebeyagae



Kidibone Setlhabe



Beauty Manoto

How do we Monitor our Training?



Ntombi agrees that we may use her picture.

Eworks was designed to monitor training remotely. Our practitioners capture client data in the field digitally: these include client assessments, individual and overall programme plans, daily logs and final reports.

Practitioners also capture regulatory Covid-19 screening data before each lesson. All our client data is then available to the Johannesburg Team in real time. Moira Higgerty (our monitoring consultant) monitors training and speaks with practitioners each week, e.g. about challenges that they may encounter with a specific client and their family members.

We also visit our practitioners in the field as often as we can.

Partnership and Advocacy

We all know that Independence Training is crucial to the well-being of the person who is blind.

There is a desperate shortage of qualified Orientation and Mobility (O&M) practitioners in South Africa.

- There are just 46 practitioners in the whole of the country.
- They can train about 2 300 people in one year.
- There are more than 700 000 blind people who need Independence Training.

We have created a partnership with two other leading organisations in the field - the John and Esther Ellerman Memorial Trust and the SA Guide Dogs Association's O&M Department. We want to make sure there are enough funded posts and training for O&M practitioners.



Sipho now finds his way confidently.



We trained:
202 people
23 children
85 young people
94 adults



Thank You to Our Donors

Not only were we able to raise the income needed for the year under review, but we were able to defer nearly one million rand to the next year. We managed this, despite the Gauteng Department of Health not funding us in this period due to a change of strategy.

We are especially thankful that our funders were flexible and accommodating. This played a huge role in helping us to achieve what we did. We once again extend our gratitude to the John and Esther Memorial Trust. They are our longest standing donor.

We thank our donors who make it possible for us to change the worlds of our blind clients.

ABSA
Anglo American Chairman's Fund
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Betsy & Neil Coville
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Consol Glass
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Stanley and Alison Sher
The Donaldson Trust
the fair labour practice
Victor Daitz Foundation





Thank you, Ian, for the first 23 Years

**Silomo Khumalo:
SAMBT Chairman**

“When I met Ian, I was purely an activist, wanting to be sure that we have practitioners at schools, just so that kids don’t hit themselves on poles and fall into holes. We know about this; we went to schools like this.

“Thank you, Ian, for all your time you have committed to this organisation. You are soft spoken; you get things done in a humble way. I have learnt a lot from you in the way you lead, leading from the back. You never have a need of showing that you are in power”.



**Avril Halstead:
SAMBT Treasurer**

“It was visionary of Ian to have started this organisation, and it also epitomises Ian. He leads not only from the back, but he also puts his needs at the back of anyone else.

“In the dawn of a new South Africa, Ian wasn’t thinking of making a quick buck, he was thinking of helping other people.

“Just thinking of the basic dignity that mobility training brings. Just thinking of how Ian started SAMBT, how he built it up.

“One of the signs of how important the organisation has become, is the way in which he set up the partnership, to really put O&M practitioners on the map, getting them accredited, making sure that the profession doesn’t die.

“Thank you for your humbleness and dedication to the institution, for coming up with the idea, and building it up to where it is today.”





Beauty Manoto: part-time practitioner at SAMBT

“Ian, you started this organisation, you established it, and then, you saved our lives. This organisation was like a baby to me. I was there when you raised this child that you called SAMBT, because I was the second practitioner to be appointed in 1999.

“You worked hard with devotion and dedication to see it grow and sustain. You were the driving force of SAMBT. What I can say. We have learnt and achieved a lot. We are multilingual because of you. We can drive through all of South Africa’s provinces. We know South Africa in and out. It was like we were touring.

“Thank you, Ian. On behalf of the blind people, thank you. They are leading independent lives because of you.

“Lastly, thank you, you will be missed, we love you, be blessed”.



Handover Report by Ian Hutton

“When there is a change of leadership in an organisation, as was the case with SAMBT with my retirement, it is important to make sure that the handover period goes smoothly and supports the new incumbent. SAMBT’s Board of Trustees has done just that. It began with an Induction Plan. This plan covered three weeks leading up to Parishna Ramluckan becoming Managing Trustee on 1st April 2021.

“The handover has been seamless and is being followed up with some mentoring by myself. This will be for a limited period only.”



Plans for the Year Ahead

Again we are planning a total of 18 programmes in the next financial year - in Limpopo, North West Province, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Free State and Gauteng.

Fortunately, we are no longer novices. We have learned to stay nimble and flexible as we train blind people in a changed world. When infections rose in an area we moved our programme elsewhere. As dates of school terms changed, we too adapted our schedules.

We plan to run each programme over a period of three months as usual.



Using a cane to ascend a staircase safely.

Audited Financial Statements

SOUTH AFRICAN MOBILITY FOR THE BLIND TRUST

TRUST NUMBER IT 10593/97

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	2021 R	2020 R
ASSETS		4 544 625	4 532 659
Non current assets		263 369	360 563
Equipment	3	263 369	360 563
Current assets		4 281 256	4 172 096
Cash and cash equivalents	4	4 110 272	3 985 452
Inventories	5	170 984	186 644
Total assets		4 544 625	4 532 659
RESERVES AND LIABILITIES		4 544 625	4 532 659
Reserves		3 441 144	3 128 085
Trust capital		100	100
Accumulated surplus		1 385 951	1 211 099
Sustainability reserve	6	1 791 724	1 556 324
Equipment fund		263 369	360 563
Current liabilities		1 103 482	1 404 574
Accounts payable	7	49 645	38 320
Deferred income	8	982 161	1 355 827
Provision for leave pay	9	71 676	10 427
Total reserves and liabilities		4 544 625	4 532 659

Audited Financial Statements

SOUTH AFRICAN MOBILITY FOR THE BLIND TRUST

TRUST NUMBER IT 10593/97

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	2021 R 3 970 585	2020 R 4 214 980
INCOME			
Grants, subsidies and donations	10	3 652 369	4 067 826
Ters benefits		169 567	-
Interest received	11	148 649	147 155
EXPENDITURE		3 657 527	3 799 686
Advocacy		329 684	348 589
Monitoring, supervision and evaluation		372 770	382 080
Office and administration		705 951	720 774
Training		1 592 433	1 590 510
Communication costs		50 607	51 235
Salaries and other contributions		850 230	802 661
Training equipment and accessories		248 985	228 589
Travel and accommodation		442 611	508 025
Staff in service training and conferences		64 727	104 957
Sustainability		329 011	376 511
Training programme - Preparation and Co-ordination		262 951	276 265
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		313 058	415 295

Audited Financial Statements

SOUTH AFRICAN MOBILITY FOR THE BLIND TRUST

TRUST NUMBER IT 10593/97

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	2021 R	2020 R
Cash received from funders		3 448 271	5 344 696
Cash expended on programmes, suppliers and employees		(3 455 590)	(3 640 848)
Cash (utilised in)/generated from operations	14	(7 320)	1 703 848
Interest received	11	148 649	147 155
Net cash inflow from operating activities		141 329	1 851 003
Cash flows (utilised in) investing activities		(16 509)	(136 363)
Acquisition of equipment		(16 509)	(191 363)
Proceeds from insurance claim on stolen laptop		-	55 000
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		124 820	1 714 640
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		3 985 452	2 270 812
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	4	4 110 272	3 985 452

As our practitioner, Joyce said:

“This has not been easy.
But I managed.
The training MUST go on.”



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PBO: 18/11/13/1400

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www.sambt.org.za

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To donate:

Banking details, South Africa:

Nedbank, Eastgate Branch

Account number: 1924260212

Branch Code: 192405

America:

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



“It feels good.
At some point,
you do something for yourself.
That’s when you realise,
you are somebody,
you are someone.
You can do something
on your own.”