



Annual Review **2025**

South African Mobility for the Blind Trust
Restoring Dignity





This page: Yvonne confidently and independently on her way to town.
Cover photo: Mpho travelling to town despite the wet weather.

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Dipuo is on her way to sit in the shade
of her favourite tree.

Message from our Chair

It is with immense honour and deep responsibility that I address you as the newly appointed Chair of the Board for South African Mobility for the Blind Trust (SAMBT). I extend sincere thanks to Silomo Khumalo for his dedicated leadership as chairman over the past five and a half years, and wish him well with his new academic pursuits abroad.

As the first woman to chair SAMBT in its nearly three decades of existence, I am eager to contribute to our ongoing journey, restoring dignity to the people we train and championing inclusion for all who are blind. My own journey, having lost my sight in 2015, profoundly illustrates the impact of independence training.

My first lessons with an Orientation and Mobility Practitioner, steps with a long cane, and mastering my first route on my own were transformative; it restored my confidence and my dreams. This life-changing power is what SAMBT delivers daily to the blind and partially sighted people we train, mirroring the experiences of my fellow blind board members.

As we present this annual report, I am reminded of the collective effort driving our success. I look forward to working alongside all of you, bringing renewed energy, to champion accessibility and advocate for a truly inclusive society for all.



Morgan's first solo trip to go and buy amagwinya from the local tuck shop.



*"I never thought
a programme like this
would come to our rural area.
I thought this only exists
in urban areas".
Mr Bheki Bengu*

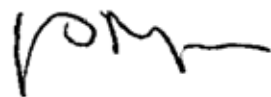
Reflections from our Managing Trustee

Imagine waking up one day in complete darkness, your world torn apart because your eyes no longer work. Your family starting to take care of your every need, your worst nightmare come true. Blindness has struck, and with that you have lost your dignity.

That is until one of our O&M Practitioners arrives at your doorstep with the hope and the dignity that independence training brings.

To our clients, who allow us into their homes, who trust us, a big thank you.

And with that I extend my thanks to each of our partners, our board and SAMBT Team, and most importantly, our Practitioners in the field: you are the true dignity restorers.



Parishna (left) in the field meeting
Gadihele in rural Free State.



Thabang Kotsi

Meet our Team Restoring Lives

Our Engine Room

Parishna Ramluckan: Managing Trustee
 Wendy Sadie: Manager
 Jacob Mohlomi: Assistant Manager
 Moira Higgerty: Monitoring & Evaluation
 Prince Monyayi: M&E (in training)
 Helen Vosloo: Asst to the Managing Trustee
 Jaqueline Perkes*: Human Resources
 Picturenet: Tech & Platform Support
 Nafisa Desai* & Jim Friedman*: Tax & Legal
 Louise Bennetts, Wendy Laufs &
 Natasha Friedman*: Finance
 Duncan Ericsson: Auditor
**pro bono*

Practitioners

Irish Muofhe
 Joyce Thebeyagae
 Kidibone Setlhabi
 Mabakane Lentsoane
 Tsholofelo Modikoe
 Thabang Kotsi
 Xoliswa Shozi



Tsholofelo Modikoe



Joyce Thebeyagae



Xoliswa Shozi



Kidibone Setlhabi



Mabakane Lentsoane



Irish Muofhe

Our Year of Dignity Restoration

During the 2024–25 financial year, our team of seven practitioners ran 28 training programmes, training altogether 325 blind people in all nine provinces.



99% of our clients are black as per the B-BBEE codes.

84% are blind and 16% are partially sighted

97% were unemployed at the time of training.*

We trained children, young people, adults and the elderly.

50% female and 50% male

Rural: 59%
Urban: 20%
Semi-Urban: 13%
Schools: 8%

Reaching Blind People, Wherever They Are

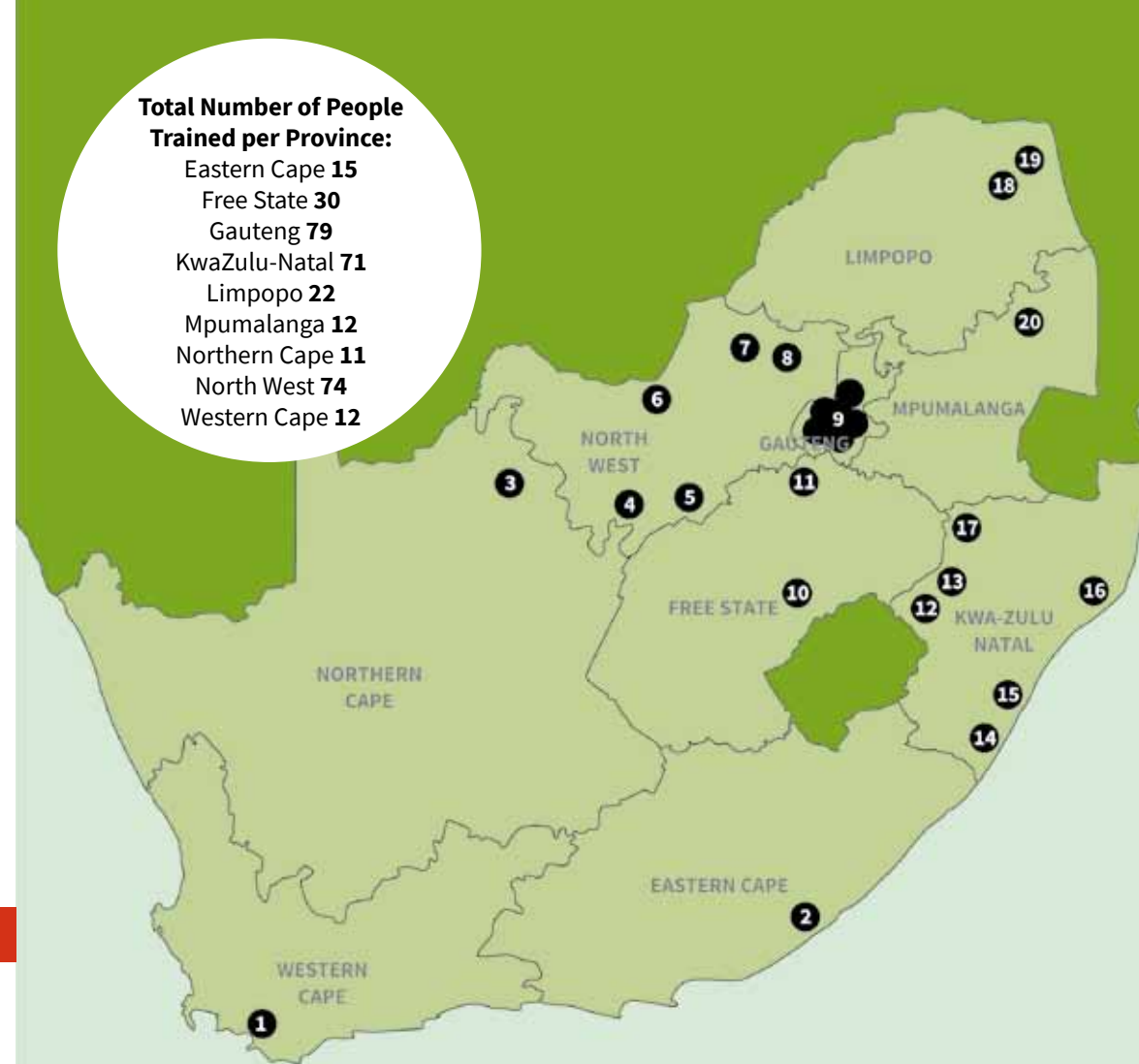
* This follows the national average unemployment rate amongst people who are blind in South Africa. <https://ajod.org/index.php/ajod/article/view/136/346#:~:text=The%20SADA%20report%20further%20indicates,is%20dependent%20on%20good%20vision>

Dignity begins at home, often in quiet, deeply personal moments when a blind person is learning to find their way in the world again. Our Practitioners enter those spaces with care, designing individualised training programmes, that respects each person's story, their courage, their dreams, and even their doubts.

Every blind person we meet believes something different about what's possible. Our role is to walk alongside them as they discover that with independence comes dignity. And with dignity comes the freedom to choose how to live, how to contribute, and how to move forward on their own terms.

Total Number of People Trained per Province:

Eastern Cape **15**
Free State **30**
Gauteng **79**
KwaZulu-Natal **71**
Limpopo **22**
Mpumalanga **12**
Northern Cape **11**
North West **74**
Western Cape **12**



Where we trained:

1. Hermanus & surrounds
2. Qonce & Bisho
3. Kuruman
4. Taung
5. Wolmaransstad
6. Mahikeng
7. Rustenburg
8. Brits
9. Gauteng
 - a. Soweto
 - b. Thembisa
 - c. Hammanskraal
 - d. Ga-Rankuwa
 - e. Ekurhuleni
 - f. Nigel
 - g. Johannesburg CBD
10. Bartimea School for the Blind
11. Parys & Vredefort
12. Bergville
13. uMnambithi
14. Port Shepstone
15. iLembe
16. Empangeni
17. Newcastle
18. Rivoni School for the Blind
19. Hlanganani
20. Bushbuckridge



Stories from Those We Trained

Dignity, Step by Step

Imagine you are a young working man. Your single mom, **Annah**, raised you and your brother on her own, and she provided for your family thanks to her job as a security guard. Then, tragedy strikes and as she loses her sight, her independence and her sense of dignity slips away.

You move her into your modest home. The roles reversed: you now cared for her. During the day, while you're at work, she relied on a bucket inside the house to relieve herself. In the evenings, upon your return home after a long day at work, you emptied the bucket, cooked a meal, cleaned the house, washed her clothes, and did all you could to keep you all going.

Then, relief arrives.

Our Orientation and Mobility Practitioner, Tsholofelo, visits your home to begin training your mom. Step by step, she learns to find her way to the outside toilet on her own, using a long white cane. With every independent movement, her dignity is restored.

Tsholo encourages your mom to greet the neighbours and start making friends again. And when she gives her a small radio, your mom begins to feel part of the world again, able to join in community conversations, to laugh, to contribute.

These days, when you come home from work at dusk, the house is swept, the washing done, and a warm meal is waiting for you. Your mom excited to tell you about her day.

Isn't that what living with dignity looks like?





Sithabiso lives in rural Bergville, deep in the Drakensberg. Since losing his sight in 2019, he struggled with severe social anxiety and depression, often retreating to his family home and sleeping much of the day. His sister, who lives with him, worried deeply as she left for work each day.

When our practitioner Xoliswa first met Sithabiso, he doubted that a blind person could ever be independent. But through counselling and tailored training, much has changed. He learned to find the outside toilet on his own. Using a talking watch to distinguish day from night, he developed healthier daily routines.

Today, Sithabiso plays an active role in his household. When his sister texts that she has bought groceries, he confidently takes his cane and wheelbarrow to meet her at the bus stop and helps carry the shopping home. Being independent, he is the designated adult who now walks his nephews and nieces to the school bus stop in the mornings. Encouraged by Xoliswa, his sister supported him in learning to cook again, and now he prepares family meals.

With the help of his doctor, Sithabiso started weaning himself off his antidepressants and sleeping pills. Reflecting on his progress, he simply says: “Thank you for coming to our rural area. Nobody here knows about mobility. You need to come back.”

Palesa* is in Grade 1. Because she can’t see, and she did not know how to get around the school campus on her own without getting lost, she always just sat around the hostel, bored, but too scared of getting lost if she ventured out. Most of the other grade Ones at her school have some sight left, and they were able to get around freely, also to the tuckshop across the road.

You will be happy to know that this has changed for Palesa since our Practitioner Joyce trained her.

She is so proud of herself that she has learnt how to take her dirty washing to the laundry room all by herself. She has started making friends. She can find her favourite play area, and make her way back to the dormitory, dining hall, or her desk in the classroom — all on her own. And yes, she has learnt how to get to the tuckshop and to the clinic inside the school premises all on her own! And because she is such a fast learner, she is helping her new best friend, little Busi find her way too.

*not her real name.



An External Evaluation

The Western Cape Department of Health completed another external evaluation of our training in the Garden Route District. The findings measured the impact on basic needs using Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a framework. Here in summary:

"The training over a short period had a life changing impact on these persons, changed their lifestyles, and had positive effect also on their families, surrounding communities and even saved the life of one person"

Monitoring and Evaluation

Our Monitoring and Evaluation lives up to our commitment to dignity, not only in our supervision and assesment of training, but throughout every stage of support to our Practitioners and their clients.

In 2024, Prince Monyayi joined SAMBT as Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in training. A qualified Occupational Therapist and trainee Orientation & Mobility Practitioner, he brings rigour, and deep respect for the independence of our clients.

Moira Higgerty continues to offer weekly support through our e work client data platform, phone calls and guiding practitioners through complex cases, whether for example adapting training for additional disabilities or navigating challenging home environments.

Moira, together with our assistant manager Jacob Mohlomi, undertook 16 field trips over 28 days in the field. In addition Parishna made five visits to our Practitioners in the field, bearing witness, to the dignity with which every client's journey is treated with.



Practitioner Tsholofelo Modikoe, Monitoring Consultant Moira Higgerty and Practitioner Joyce Thebeyagae during a street crossing exercise at our team week.



Our
Practitioner
Tsholofelo
Modikoe.

Advocating for Dignity and Rights

Restoring independence to individual blind people is central to our work.

But dignity doesn't stop at the front gate. It also means being seen, respected, and included in homes, clinics, shops, schools, and workplaces, challenging assumptions about what blind people can and cannot do.

This past year, we continued to advocate for the visibility and inclusion of blind people in everyday life. We hosted sensitisation workshops for healthcare workers, and held community events, often attended by government officials. Participants explored blindness through guided activities under blindfold, helping to build empathy.

As more blind people are seen confidently independent in a community, others begin to step forward, saying: "me too, please." Systems start to shift, not because they are overhauled from above, but because dignity starts working from within.

In the end, our advocacy is about choice. About creating a world in which blind people can live with confidence, purpose, and dignity, not because they are helped, but because they are free to choose how they want to live.



An attentive audience at an
advocacy event in Hammanskraal
organised by our Practitioner
Tsholofelo Modikoe.



Governance That Upholds Dignity

In March this year, our Chairman of the past five and a half years, Silomo Khumalo resigned. We wish him well as he is pursuing his doctorate in disability rights in Australia.

Silindile Makhaye, previously our deputy chair, was elected as chair.

All our board members bring skills relevant to our work and their roles as Trustees. They include Thabsile Levin, Rhulani Baloyi and Nnyana Mokale.

The board met 3 times during the year under review. We thank our treasurer Avril Halstead for the quarterly finance meetings she continues to hold with management.

Left: In the rural Northern Cape, Poppie can now be certain of the value of the cash in her hand. A simple banknote template has given her a new level of financial independence.

Plans for 2025–26

Our approach remains one of radical outreach. We continue to meet blind people where they are, in their homes, schools, and communities, no matter how rural or remote. Most of our work takes place in deeply under-resourced rural areas, where O&M training is non-existent and the need is vast.

In the year ahead, we plan to run 25 training programmes, reaching about 300 blind people across all nine provinces. As always, every person will receive personalised, one-on-one training tailored to their environment, needs and interests, whether they live in a township, a rural village, or a college dormitory.

We're especially excited to increase our reach through seven school and college-based training programmes this year: helping blind children and young adults build confidence and independence where they live and learn, mostly in rural areas.

As ever, our goal is to ensure that every blind person has access to the training, tools, and support they need to live with dignity and choice.

Right: Richard out and about and enjoying life.





Thank you to our Donors

To our donors, a heartfelt thank you.

Whether you represent one of the 29 corporates, trusts, or foundations; a government department; or are one of our generous individual donors here at home and abroad, your gift brought dignity to each of the 325 people we trained.

We honour the John and Esther Ellerman Memorial Trust, whose support since 1998 has helped build this legacy of dignity, one life at a time.

This past year, five government departments deepened their commitment to dignity by bringing independence training to blind citizens in their provinces: Gauteng Department of Health, City of Joburg, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, North West Department of Health and Western Cape Department of Health.

And to every donor who has walked alongside us in the field, a big thank you. For our clients your visits mean a lot. It provides a moment of feeling seen as someone with value.



Anonymous
Anglo Gold Ashanti
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Investec CSI
Joan St. Leger Lindbergh Charitable Trust
John and Esther Ellerman Memorial Trust
KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health
Lewis Group
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North West Provincial Department of Health
Rachel Du Toit Charitable Trust
Solomon Ruben & Ann Winer Educational & Benefit Trust
Stanley and Alison Sher
The Health Foundation in partnership with the Western
Cape Department of Health
Victor Daitz Foundation



in partnership with the Western
Cape Department of Health



Financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025

SOUTH AFRICAN MOBILITY FOR THE BLIND TRUST
REGISTRATION NUMBER IT 10593/97

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2025 R	2024 R
Assets			
Non-Current Assets			
Equipment	3	999 132	834 123
Current Assets			
Inventories	5	368 283	321 527
Accrued income	4	420 902	548 666
Prepayments		-	11 000
Cash and cash equivalents	6	8 343 900	8 000 383
		9 133 085	8 881 576
Total Assets		10 132 217	9 715 699
Equity and Liabilities			
Equity			
Trust capital	7	100	100
Reserves		4 238 953	3 586 025
Accumulated surplus		3 418 653	3 050 071
		7 657 706	6 636 196
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts payable	9	566	6 478
Deferred income	10	2 428 864	3 027 944
Provisions	11	45 081	45 081
		2 474 511	3 079 503
Total Equity and Liabilities		10 132 217	9 715 699

SOUTH AFRICAN MOBILITY FOR THE BLIND TRUST
REGISTRATION NUMBER IT 10593/97

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2025 R	2024 R
Other income	12	7 780 197	6 933 281
Operating expenses		-7 319 428	-5 960 469
Operating surplus		460 769	972 812
Investment revenue	13	560 741	518 173
		1 021 510	1 490 985
Other comprehensive income		1 021 510	1 490 985

SOUTH AFRICAN MOBILITY FOR THE BLIND TRUST
REGISTRATION NUMBER IT 10593/97

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2025 R	2024 R
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	18	179 647	835 210
Interest income		560 741	518 173
Net cash from operating activities		740 388	1 353 383
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of equipment	3	-397 246	-297 487
Sale of equipment		375	-
		-396 871	-297 487
Total cash movement for the year		343 517	1 055 896
Cash at the beginning of the year		8 000 383	6 944 487
Cash at the end of the year		8 343 900	8 000 383

How You Can Make a Difference

- Include a blind person in your circle of friends;
- Introduce yourself to a blind person in your area
- Refer them to SAMBT for independence training;
- Offer your support to a blind person in your area;
- Talk to the blind person in the taxi or bus next to you;
 - Offer a lift to the shops
- Or offer to bring back something from the shops;
- Ask if you can help with any tasks requiring sight;
 - Donate to SAMBT.

Daniel's talking watch helps him to take his medication on time.





*“Who visits a blind person?
No-one! That is, until you came.
You made me feel important.
You make me a better person.
And since you came,
people are respecting me.”*
Anonymous Client
in rural KZN

South African Mobility for the Blind Trust

Tel: +27 61 145 4282; +27 11 487 0082

Email: info@sambt.org.za

Fax: +27 86 666 6629


Physical address: 24 3rd Avenue, Melville, 2092

Trust registration no.: IT10593/97

NPO Registration no.: 007-220 NPO

PBO: 18/11/13/1400

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To donate:

Banking Details, South Africa:

FNB

Account Number: 62927387987

Branch Code: 250655

America:

https://www.every.org/south-african-mobility-for-the-blind-trust-za?utm_campaign=donate-link#/donate/card