



What is the mandate of Kenya Society for the Blind (KSB)?

The Kenya Society for the Blind (KSB) is a statutory charitable organization established in 1956 by an Act of Parliament (The Kenya Society for the Blind Act – Chapter 251):

- (a) To promote the welfare, education, training and employment of the blind and to assist in the prevention and alleviation of blindness,
- (b) To assist the government, societies, any institution, organizations or society or person in all matters related to blind,
- (c) To awaken public interest in the welfare of the blind and in all matters relating to blindness,
- (d) To advise on all things necessary or required in any matter to or connected with the blind

Who Funds KSB?

Although KSB is mandated and formed by an Act of Parliament, it is not financed by the government but is required to raise funds through charity work, donations, grants, gifts and subscription as per Session 14 of the KSB Act.

KSB's Programmes

KSB provides Education, Eye Care and Rehabilitation Services: In year **2016 alone** and with well-wishers, we achieved the following:

1. 179,000 patients had their eye screened and treated
2. 80 Persons with visual impairment (PWVI) were trained on computer adaptive technology.
3. 2,993 children with visual impairment were supported in over 641 special and integrated schools
4. 560 reams of Braille paper, 75 low vision Devices (LVD,s), 125 white canes to children, 179 sound balls, 10 scientific calculators, 32 Brallon Papers; 180 PEP Kits were issued

What are the Causes of Blindness?

- Cataracts
- Glaucoma
- Trachoma
- Diabetes
- HIV/AIDS
- Age related – macular degeneration
- Accidents; illicit brew
- congenital or acquired blindness

Failure to do have regular eye check ups is the major cause of blindness since 80% of all blindness is preventable with earlier screening and treatment.

Who can be KSB Member

- Every sighted Kenyan (irrespective of age, gender, faith, creed, race, profession, ability/disability)
- All Persons with Visual Impairment (PWVI)
- All Government agencies
- All Corporates and private bodies,
- All learning institutions
- All religious and non-religious organizations
- Communities where people can be born or acquire disability at any time naturally or otherwise.

Membership Categories

- Complete membership application forms
 - Ordinary member = Ksh 1,000/=
 - Life Member = Ksh 5,000/=
 - Corporate member = Ksh 50,000/=

The donation received from Closing the Gap qualifies the organization to be a corporate member.

About Centre for Adaptive Technology

The CAT was started in 1999 in response to the need to train visually impaired in computer skills. Learner usually receives individualized training so as to access and transmit information electronically. Training is individualized since learners join classes any time they are ready. Some finish earlier while other may take longer (4 months maximum) depending on their learning abilities and their adaptive skills.

The Need for ICT among the Blind community:

University and college students ought to be fast in capturing notes and doing their assignment for them to be competitive like their sighted colleagues. A Braille machine is about six kilograms and a learner may hardly carry such a machine from one lecture hall to another. At the same time, the lectures may not be touch reader. It is thus important for all blind learners to be computer literate. Learners with visual impairment should be well versed with basic ICT technology. With the emergent technology, LWVI should embrace ICT that use assistive technology software to converts computer text into audio for the blind and into large print for those who have low vision. Such are trained in: Introduction to Windows XP, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, MS PowerPoint Internet & Email. These skills are mastered through screen reading software known as Job Access with Speech (JAWs) and Magic. Since 2006, KSB has trained over 540 persons with visual impairment mostly Form four schools leavers across the country.

KSB has been using 10 very old computers once donated Closing the Gap for the last over 10 years. 5 of these 10 computers were in the computer laboratory for the blind. 5 were being used by KSB staff.

With the new donation of computers from Closing the Gap, KSB has fully revamped the CAT with 25 computers. Following which we did extra electrification and cabling. Now, the CAT class is the most equipped computer lab serving the blind community in East Africa.

To make these computers functional, we have equipped the computers wit:

1. Licenses of screen reader (jaws - latest version) for totally blind

2. Licenses of screen magnifying software (magic) for the low vision
3. Licenses of TypeAbility

These licenses were donated by Free Scientific its local partner ITAC Consulting.

KSB has also replaced all the old computers used by staff and replaced them with other. Thanks to this initiative, KSB has received Microsoft licenses from Microsoft. To help KSB in its financial management system, KSB has also upgraded its information system from Navasion 7 to the most current Navasion 18. This was not possible with the old computers.

Soon KSB is launching another adaptive computer classes to encourage more blind to learn and also the sighted to learn more advance blind adaptive technology.