



NEW AGE FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED (NAVI)

New Age. New Opportunities. Better Life.

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ORGANISATIONAL BACKGROUND

NAVI is a non-governmental institution established on 13th June 2016 accordance with the statutory requirements of the Kenyan Constitution, whose focal interest is to change the lives of persons with visual impairment granting them equal opportunities in the increasingly competitive world.

The majority of the Association's Founders are visually impaired persons who have personally identified with challenges and issues that have not been explored by other similar organizations.

The true essence of NAVI is drawn from the fact that it is an organization created and run by Visually Impaired persons for the betterment of the Visually Impaired community. They founding members are painfully aware of the challenges that the Visually Impaired community undergoes and still believe that with the right tools and a collective voice, they can change narrative of so many Visually Impaired people to bring a sense of dignity, productivity and belonging within the national community through its pillar objectives and goals. With this motivation and desire to change the world, they have devoted their resources to bring a new age to the visually impaired through:

- ◆ Awareness and Advocacy
- ◆ Assistive technology;
- ◆ Economic Empowerment;
- ◆ Rehabilitation

STRATEGY

Vision

A society where persons with visual impairment, enjoy equal access to opportunities in development, and impact in society without being disadvantaged.

Mission

To ensure blind and partially sighted persons are empowered and equipped with skills to compete fairly in the constantly competitive world.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the organisation are:

- a) Improving economic status of persons with visual impairment through a program on economic empowerment.
- b) Awareness creation; a lot of people in the country are still ignorant of issues pertaining Visual impairment.
- c) Education; how to improve access to information to children and adults with visual impairments.

- d) Advocate for affordable adaptive technology in all sectors, I.E: mobility aids, educational aids, medical aids, kitchen aids, access technology whilst at the same time being a hub of the latest cutting edge technology and research.
- e) To train persons with visual impairment from all walks of life on adaptive technology such as basic computer skills and the use of mobile phones and other assistive devices.
- f) To provide assistive devices to either individuals who are visually impaired or institutions and organisations requiring them. In order to achieve this objective, NAVI shall sell such devices at the set market price or rent them out at a cost determined by the management committee.
- g) To provide counselling services to those, who due to various causes, have become visually impaired irreversibly.
- h) To provide legal advice to persons with visual impairment, or where deemed necessary, sue a person, institution, company, government or any other legal entity; if it is proved that the legal entity has infringed on the rights of a person with visual impairment; and as a result has broken both sovereign and international law.
- i) To aid the integration of persons with visual impairment in institutions, organisations and companies wishing to employ persons with visual impairment.
- j) To widen the area of coverage by establishing new offices and expanding our activities to cover all regions in Kenya.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Pillars of Operation

- a) To create awareness on blindness, the causes, the challenges and the possibilities
- b) To avail a learning platform for visually impaired persons of all ages to learn to use and acquire current technology (Software and Hardware)
- c) To advocate for opportunities, public services/amenities and resources for visually impaired persons
- d) To help drive economic empowerment for visually impaired persons.
- e) To support visually impaired persons and create a platform for candid conversations with the aim of finding broad-based solutions and/or opportunities for the Visually Impaired community.

NAVI plans to use all available online and offline platforms to spearhead its programs for maximum reach to all stakeholders, well-wishers and interested parties.

Awareness & Advocacy

NAVI is planning to launch an assertive awareness campaign to create awareness on the challenges and biases that visually impaired persons undergo in their day to day living, in an environment where most sighted people remain oblivious and in-supportive. Some of the areas of concern and great challenge are:

- ✓ Roads - even pavements, uncovered manholes, filled sewers, construction sites that have encroached the pavements leaving all pedestrians vulnerable to vehicle traffic.
- ✓ Buildings - Voice Activated elevators, wall rails, even stairways , building markings for visually impaired persons e.g. building names, floor number, door number, etc., security checks and customer service and business etiquette training for business employees when assisting visually impaired persons, e.g. in supermarkets, restaurants, etc.
- ✓ Transport - Sensitizing drivers on road safety and caution for visually impaired persons as well as pushing for implementation of the Traffic Act to curb careless driving, parking and noise pollution which tends to disorient visually impaired persons.
- ✓ Education/Reading - Braille Translations for public/government, restaurant menus, newspapers, magazines books, product labels, equipment e.g. smart phones, touch cookers and microwaves, etc.
- ✓ Marrakesh VIP Treaty - NAVI is keen to spearhead a strong campaign to encourage our leadership to sign the Marrakesh Treaty in order facilitate access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities.
- ✓ Technology - Source and avail assistive equipment and software that visually impaired persons can use e.g. voice activated software for computers, braille printers, smartphones, etc.
- ✓ Public Services - government and public services e.g. eCitizen, NSSF, NHIF, etc. in their current state, are difficult to use for visually impaired persons.
- ✓ Resources - source for braille and audio books, internet and mobile apps, audio described entertainment (e.g. movies) etc.

Adaptive Technology

- ✓ Sourcing and availing assistive technology for visually impaired persons in Kenya
- ✓ Advocating for government tax exemptions for tools, hardware and equipment for visually impaired persons.
- ✓ Promote creation of local apps, radio and resources with local content for visually impaired persons
- ✓ NAVI seeks to provide training and skills development for visually impaired persons to understand, use and enjoy the available assistive technology.

Economic Empowerment

NAVI seeks to establish itself as an entrepreneurial non-profit organization. In so doing, NAVI will:

- ✓ Push for inclusion and access of visually impaired persons into the labor workforce and in specific effort being targeted at industrial players, the corporate world and the government

- ✓ Advocate for safe and conducive working environment for visually impaired persons in their work places and provision of good infrastructure of assistive technologies
- ✓ Advocate for acceptable remuneration and exemptions for employees with visual impairment.
- ✓ Encourage Visually Impaired Persons to enter into entrepreneurship by working with other partners to:
 - Engage with the government, the banking sector and other industries to ensure that all public services (financial or non-financial) required for business are available and easily accessible to Visually Impaired persons.
 - Offer incubation and business centers for visually impaired persons at subsidized rates
 - Offer technology and resources to enable Visually Impaired Persons to engage in business.
 - Push for tax exemptions and subsidies
 - Provide Business/Entrepreneurship Training, information and updates are regularly available for Visually Impaired Persons.

Rehabilitation

As not all Visually Impaired persons are born that way, healthy communities must consider the provision of adequate and professional environments that allow for a caring rehabilitation program for Visually Impaired persons. NAVI will seek to partner with other NGOs, the government and other like-minded partners to ensure that

- ✓ Proper rehabilitation programs are initiated within the country
- ✓ A vocation training framework is established under the Ministry of Education and replicated throughout all the 47 counties in the country.
- ✓ Facilities and professionals are on hand to oversee the rehabilitation process in a dignified, caring and professional manner.

THE TEAM

● IVAN O. OMONDI

After losing his sight in September of 2014, Ivan found himself in a position where every aspect of his life went under immense transformation. At the time of losing his sight he was pursuing a Bachelors of Commerce degree, specializing in marketing with the aim of aiding in the running of his two business ventures namely Wayside Customs Garage which was incorporated in 2006 and Destiny Hotel in Kisumu a 2010 venture. Ivan joined the Kenya society for the blind in January of 2015 where he took a Braille and computer course thanks to a screen reading software application (JAWS). This training has really helped him become skillful technology wise. During his journey of accepting his new condition, he has interacted with a good number of individuals who have completed high school and some in employment who lost their sight in adulthood and they could relate with the challenges they faced.

● LAWRENCE MOMANYI

Lawrence was born in Nairobi, Kenya with the ability to see. However, his parents say that one could easily tell that he had sight problems even at that tender age. He crawled and began walking without any difficulty. At the age of one-and-a-half years, he lost my eyesight as a result of retinal detachment. He no longer stopped when a person passed in front of him and often walked straight into obstacles along the way. He was taken to various hospitals in an attempt to find out whether my eyesight could be restored but this proved futile. In 2014, he went to the Kenya Society for the Blind (KSB) to study computer he successfully obtained a certificate and the skills which to this day help him use a computer adeptly. In 2015, he joined the University of Nairobi where he is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in Economics. He hopes that he will successfully complete his degree and work in the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) or the Treasury.

● ANGELINE AKAI

Angeline was born fully sighted but she contracted measles at a young age and lost her eyesight due to delayed treatment. She sat the Kenya Certificate for Primary Education (KCPE) examination at Thika Primary School for the Blind, passed and went to Moi Girls' High School, Nairobi where she sat the Kenya Certificate for Secondary Education (KCSE) examination and moved on to college. She graduated with a certificate in Education from Highridge Teachers College and also acquired a certificate in counselling from the Kenya Association of Professional Counsellors (KAPC). The challenge, however, lay in securing employment. Together with other visually impaired people she trained in shiatsu therapy by the Japan International Cooperative Agency (JICA). Angeline today is able to earn a living from shiatsu therapy.

● LAURA ETORI

Laura Etori was born sighted. She was raised in the rural Central Kenya and dreamed of becoming an actuary. One day she got a headache that would not stop and despite seeing numerous doctors she begun to slowly lose her sight. She travelled to India for further medical evaluation and treatment and was found to have suffered from idiopathic intracranial hypertension (IIH). Losing her sight left her completely at a loss as she lost her seat at the university and now had to recalibrate her life beginning with the basics like learning braille and using assistive technology. She was eventually accepted at Rutgers University in Newark, USA and had to adjust to living without her sight, living in a foreign country and struggling with overcoming numerous financial obstacles. She remains optimistic and looks forward to being able to come home and work with other blind and visually impaired persons to build a stronger community.

SUSTAINABILITY MODEL

Whilst NAVI works to raise capital through grants, donations and gifts, it is committed to building a sustainable operating model that will enable it to become self-reliant and independent in staying on course with its objectives and goals. In essence NAVI is looking to building a platform that is owned, governed and grown by Virtually Impaired persons.

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The proposed revenue streams include but are not limited to:

- a) Annual membership fees which will be open to both sighted and blind persons.
- b) Sales and training of assistive technology (software, hardware) as well as repair where possible in collaboration with NAVI Customized Solutions, a business platform that was registered in September 2016.
- c) Using the NAVI website real estate as a platform to rent advertising space to other service/product providers or Visually Impaired community e.g. technology shops, businesses belonging to Virtually Impaired persons, entertainment, news, business tools and apps, resources, etc.
- d) Run an Entrepreneurship Hub for Visually Impaired Persons to run their businesses in a safe and yet competitive environment. The plan is that the VIPs will rent office space in the Hub and will receive amenities such as internet, furniture, printing, telephone, reception and courier services, shared conference and cafeteria space, access to business coaching/consultancy services.
- e) Resource Centre - Being a resource center for VIP Entrepreneurs to find access to funding, grants, technology, tools, books (novels and reference books) and information on amenities and tenders/opportunities available for VIPs.
- f) Events - whether they are fundraising, entertainment, corporate or learning events, NAVI will seek to use this platforms to generate revenue to run its other programs. In addition to generating resources, NAVI will create entertainment events such as hikes, trips, fun days, etc. to help build a sense of community for all NAVI members and partakers as well as encourage a sense of confidence and adventure life for VIPs.

CONCLUSION

2017 was the year that we were finally been able to overcome the basic challenges of getting our organization in order with regard to administration support, financial structures, program design and implementation and membership. We have set in motion various activities in line with our programs in order to serve our members and create awareness to the plight of blind and visually impaired people in Kenya. We realize that we will only be able to achieve our goals through the support of well-wishers and partners and it is to this end that we are sharing our Profile with you.

In 2018, we have already planned for and have begun:

- a) Monthly meetings for members (both blind/visually impaired and sighted for purposes of support, social engagement and strategy.
- b) Social events that our membership can enjoy e.g. Audit Described movies, get-togethers, sports and community outreach events to help those less fortunate.
- c) Advocacy projects – highlighting and calling for change on matters that affect blind and virtually impaired persons in their day to day lives e.g. the need for voice activated elevators and even steps in commercial buildings, covers for manholes on the roads, voice activated options on public internet and physical domains e.g. eCitizen, KRA iTax, braille translated documents etc.

d) Development of a resource center for the blind to carry audio and braille content for education, business, entertainment etc.

We invite you to consider partnering with us to realize our dream and make a difference in the lives of the visually impaired.

Please visit and connect with us on our online platforms:

Website: www.newagevi.org

Facebook: New Age for the Visually Impaired (NAVI)

Twitter: @Navi_ke

Instagram: Navi.ke

We thank you for providing us this opportunity to introduce ourselves and the New Age for the Visually Impaired (NAVI).

We look forward to your support and partnership.