

IMPROVISING A WHITE CANE AS A MOBILITY DEVICE AND A TRAFFIC SIGN

MESSAGE:

Knowledge about the existence and importance of a white cane for blind

Person's mobility and identity will improve self-esteem life inclusion life

Inclusion and minimise road accidents to the blind.

OBJECTIVE:

This article is intended to advocate to all people working for the welfare of

The blind to work towards creating awareness to the community about

THE WHITE CANE AND ITS IMPACT TO VIPs

INTRODUCTION:

A white cane is a device which can save the blind person in their mobility.

At the same time, it can identify them to drivers and other road users.

Therefore, a white cane can help a blind person to move freely and create

Self-confidence.

A white cane has been introduced many centuries ago. It has proved

Very useful for mobility as well as an identity blind persons.

There are evidences which show the importance of white canes. In 1930

The Lions Club of Pioria Illinois, succeeded to convince the government

To announce the first law which legalized white cane as a traffic symbol.

This enabled the blind to move freely and be recognized by drivers and

Other road users.

PREVAILLING SITUATION IN TANZANIA ABOUT THE WHITE CANE AND

IT'S RELEVANCE TO THE BLIND.

Formal introduction of white canes initially came in 1950 when the first school for the blind- Buigiri, Dodoma was built by missionaries. The use of white cane and its demand kept increasing to date. The blind who were exposed to mobility training

We're not given access to white canes.

HONOURING THE WHITE CANE AND ENPOWERING THE BLIND AND VIPs

White canes are useful mobility devices for the blind. They are used to detect obstacles

In pathways; detecting obstacles, helps the blind person to get the right path or change direction in order to have a safe travel.

Proper use of white canes depends upon using appropriate cane techniques. This can only be acquired through training in hand grip, arch, rhythm, wrist movement etc.

Although white canes vary in size and types, the purpose of using them remain the same.

Since the need for training is crucial, the government and NGOs like Sight Savers

International, CCBRT, Tanzania Society for the Blind and others need to extend

Their already initiated programmes in rehabilitation so that they reach more needy

Irreversibly blind person.

Local authorities and related NGOs can also subsidize by providing funds for facilitation

Of more CBR Workers who work voluntarily. These can also participate in conducting awareness seminars to:-

- the blind

- the law enforcement officers

- motor vehicle drivers

- and the community at large.

These seminars will focus on creating the understanding of the white cane and its potentialities.

It is through these seminars that the law enforcement officers and the parliament need to decide on the importance of using a white cane symbol as a traffic sign and pass a relevant law.

Nevertheless, information about:-

- the white cane

- its relevancy to the blind persons' mobility

- and its impact to a blind person's daily life

- will continuously be addressed for public understanding through:-

- leaflets

- bulletins

- TVT – wape nafasi programme

October 15th this year, Tanzania is going to celebrate the second year honoring THE WORLD WHITE CANE DAY.

CONCLUSION:-Life inclusion includes equity in access to individual's needs. The blind

Persons need white cane for their mobility in order to be free in their

Movements. This will contribute to self-esteem and the ability to

Make social interaction within the community.

It is therefore necessary for the community and those working for the

Welfare of the blind to have knowledge about:-

-the existence of white cane

-the importance for mobility and identity

-the importance of being used as a traffic sign

-to minimize accidents.