The World Blind Union is the global organization representing the estimated 253 million people who are blind or partially sighted worldwide. We are blind men and women who advocate on our own behalf for full and equal participation in all aspects of community life. Our members are organizations of and for the blind in about 190 countries, as well as international organizations working in the field of vision impairment.

We work through six regions: Africa, Asia, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and North America & the Caribbean. We are governed by a board of officers comprised of six regional presidents and six internationally elected officers: Dr. Fredric Schroeder of USA, Mr. Fernando Riaño of Spain, Ms. Donatilla Kanumba of Rwanda, Mr. Ajai Kumar Mittal of India, Mrs. Martine Abel-Williamson of New Zealand and Mr. Amt Holte of Norway.

Vision Impairment Facts

- Worldwide, 253 million people are visually impaired; of these, 36 million people are blind and 217 million people have moderate or severe vision impairment.
- 124 million people have uncorrected refractive errors and 65 million have cataracts.
- More than 75% of all blindness and visual impairment is avoidable.
- 89% of vision impaired people live in low and middle-income countries.
- 55% of moderate or severely vision impaired people are women.

Source: The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB)
Changing What It Means to be Blind...

**Human Rights and Representation**

The WBU promotes full participation, equal opportunities and the human rights of blind and partially sighted people. We work with our members to monitor ratification and implementation of human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We ensure that our members are actively engaged in the implementation processes and understand the implications and opportunities provided by these instruments.

We also ensure representation at the United Nations and relevant global forums where we promote inclusion and equal participation in all matters affecting our lives.

**Marrakesh Treaty**

Over 90% of all published materials cannot be read by blind or partially sighted people. We lead the **Marrakesh Treaty** campaign to increase availability of books in accessible formats. We need all countries to ratify the Treaty.

**Capacity Building**

We build the capacity of our members to tackle issues of blindness and low vision. Our focus is to improve employment opportunities for blind and partially sighted people, through **Project Aspiro**, a career planning and employment resource. We also develop tools to improve our members capacity to work collaboratively and share resources. Furthermore, we build leadership skills to empower target groups such as blind and partially sighted women and youth.

**Accessibility**

The WBU works towards a world that is accessible to blind and partially sighted persons. We promote access to low and high technology solutions, accessible consumer and household goods, mobile technologies and accessible services. We also promote safe environments, especially **Shared Spaces**, to ensure independent travel and easy mobility for people with visual impairment. Meanwhile, we are monitoring the development of self-driving cars to ensure that they are detectable and accessible to blind people.

**Information Sharing and Collaboration**

We raise awareness and provide resources on matters related to blind and partially sighted people through the WBU website, social media and other communications channels. We also use these channels to reinforce our alliances with international organizations.

**Promotion of Braille**

We advance braille literacy through the work of the World Braille Council. Specifically, we promote the teaching and availability of refreshable braille around the world.

Learn more about our work and member organizations on our website: [www.worldblindunion.org](http://www.worldblindunion.org)
Also follow us on Twitter and Facebook [@BlindUnion](https://twitter.com/BlindUnion)