

# Computer education is a tool for independence for Persons with Low Vision

## Introduction

I am Iqrah wali, a passionate trainer dedicated to empowering individuals with low vision. I work as a Computer Trainer and Low Vision Trainer at the Parivartan Centre, Voluntary Medicare Society, Srinagar. I specialize in teaching people with low vision to use computers and assistive technologies like magnifiers and other Low Vision settings.

Computer education plays a vital role in improving the independence and quality of life of persons with low vision. This presentation is based on practical training experiences at Voluntary Medicare Society. It highlights how assistive technology, accessible software, and structured computer training help low-vision individuals perform daily, educational, and professional tasks independently.

- Low vision affects daily activities, education, and employment.
- Many persons with low vision depend on others for basic tasks.
- Computer education helps reduce dependency.
- Technology can act as an equalizer when used properly.

## Insights

- Patient and empathy are crucial while teaching low vision learners.
- Assistive technology alone is not enough- proper guidelines is essential.
- A real-life practical task increases learner motivation.
- Learners gained confidence to use computers without help.
- Training improved self-esteem and sense of empowerment.
- Social communication improved through digital platforms.

## Methodology

The training process followed a structured and learner-centered approach to ensure effective participation and independence of persons with low vision.

### Identification and Outreach

Potential trainees were identified through community networks, referrals, and direct outreach. Students with visual impairment or low vision were contacted through phone calls, official social media platforms and personal communication to ensure maximum reach.

### Assessment and Selection

Each student underwent an assessment to evaluate visual status, functional ability, and suitability for computer training. Students with more than 70% disability were not selected for low-vision computer training, as the program was designed specifically for persons with low vision.

### Need-Based Training

Selected students were provided training based on their individual needs, focusing on basic computer skills, keyboard orientation, typing, MS Office, and internet usage.

- **Psychosocial support and psychotherapy.**

Many students faced depression, stress, or emotional challenges. Psychotherapy was provided through the in-house psychologist at Voluntary Medicare Society to support their mental well-being.

- **Assistive Technology Orientation**

Students were introduced to assistive devices and accessibility features. They were guided on how to use assistive technology effectively in daily computer work.

- **Continuous Monitoring and Support**

Students' progress was monitored on a daily basis. Regular feedback was provided to track improvement and address learning gaps.

- **Supportive Learning Environment**

A safe, inclusive, and encouraging learning environment was created to help students learn comfortably and confidently.

- **Assessment of Trainees**

Evaluated each student's visual ability to determine if they are suitable for computer training  
Identified individual strengths and areas needing support

- **Practical Training Sessions**

Conducted hands-on sessions and demonstrations  
Ensured trainees understood tasks before performing them independently  
Focused on practical skills like typing, MS Office, and internet use

- **Use of Assistive Technology**

Introduced trainees to available assistive devices  
Helped them identify which tools work best for their needs  
Enabled learners to perform tasks more efficiently and independently

- **Monitoring Progress**

Observed daily progress in tasks such as typing and other computer activities  
Identified areas needing improvement

- **Encouragement and Support**

Provided monthly feedback and motivation  
Assigned challenging tasks gradually to build skills and confidence  
Ensured continuous support to promote independence

## **Case Study**

### **Andleeb Hassan**

Andleeb Hassan is a young girl from Srinagar, born in 2003, who once had many dreams and hopes for a bright future. Like every young person, she wanted to study, grow, and build an independent life. However, her life took an unexpected and painful turn after she met with a serious accident. This accident, along with two open-heart surgeries, had a severe impact on her health and eyesight. As a result, her vision became weak, and her life changed completely. The long medical treatments, surgeries, and recovery process were physically painful and emotionally exhausting. Due to her health condition and vision problems, Andleeb lost her confidence and started believing that she could no longer study or achieve anything meaningful. Gradually, she left her studies and felt that all her dreams had been shattered. Fear, confusion, and self-doubt surrounded her, and she often questioned whether she would ever become independent or move forward in life.

During this difficult phase, a ray of hope entered her life when she received a call from Voluntary Medicare Society (VMS), Srinagar. She was informed about an opportunity to join their computer training program. She first enrolled in the orientation computer course, which helped her understand the basics and slowly rebuild her confidence. This small step gave her the courage to believe in herself again.

After a few months, Andleeb took admission in the Office Productivity Course at VMS. With continuous guidance, patience, and encouragement from her trainer, she learned essential computer skills and gained practical knowledge. The supportive environment at VMS helped her overcome her fears and realize that her health challenges could not stop her from learning and progressing.

Along with the computer course, Andleeb resumed her studies and successfully managed both education and technical training side by side. Today, she is confident, motivated, and determined to take her studies forward and build a bright future for herself.

Andleeb is deeply thankful to Voluntary Medicare Society, Srinagar, for giving her a new direction in life. She also expresses heartfelt gratitude to her trainer for constant support and motivation. This journey transformed her mindset, restored her confidence, and reignited her dreams. Although the path was difficult, VMS became the light in her darkest phase and helped her rise again with strength and hope.

## **Irtiqa Bhat**

Irtiqa Bhat is a young girl from Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, who was born with low vision. From an early age, she faced many challenges due to her visual disability. Limited acceptance and understanding from family and society affected her emotional well-being, often making her feel isolated, stressed, and discouraged.

A positive change came into Irtiqa's life when she received an unexpected call from Voluntary Medicare Society (VMS). She was invited to attend a two-day orientation training program. This short program became a turning point, as it helped her gain initial exposure to computer learning and boosted her confidence. Encouraged by this experience, she enrolled in the Office Productivity Course at VMS.

The training at VMS brought a remarkable transformation in Irtiqa's life. Earlier, she lacked self-confidence and depended on others for daily activities, including traveling outside her home. Today, she travels independently, uses computers confidently, and manages her tasks efficiently. The trainers at VMS supported her with patience, empathy, and consistent guidance, creating a comfortable and motivating learning environment.

As a result of this training, Irtiqa has experienced reduced stress and improved mental strength. She now feels empowered, confident, and capable of shaping her own future. The course not only provided her with technical skills but also restored her self-belief and independence.

Irtiqa expresses deep gratitude to Voluntary Medicare Society for empowering her, building her confidence, and opening the door to a more independent and hopeful life. This journey marks a new beginning, filled with skills, confidence, and opportunities.

## **Achievement**

**Aabid Ahmad** from Srinagar lost his eyesight completely due to glaucoma and became 100% blind. After losing his vision, he was unable to work and struggled to support his family. Voluntary Medicare Society (VMS) connected with him and enrolled him in a computer orientation and career awareness program. These trainings helped him regain confidence and realize that he could still be independent. Today, Aabid runs his own honey business, supplies products within the city, and supports his family with dignity. His journey reflects the power of guidance, skill development, and self-belief.

In addition to this, VMS has achieved remarkable success in motivating students who had dropped out of their studies due to disability or personal challenges. After creating a supportive learning environment and providing skill-based courses, VMS encouraged these students to return to education. As a result, **17 students** have taken admission through the Open School system. They are now preparing for their examinations and will soon continue their formal education. This outcome stands as a major achievement for VMS in empowering students through education and skill development.

### **Mubashir from Kupwara District, Jammu & Kashmir:**

Mubashir was born with low vision, but in the 9th grade, an accident caused acid to fall into his eyes, worsening his vision. He faced severe challenges and was very distressed at home. One day, VMS contacted him and invited him to join their programs. Mubashir successfully completed the Fundamentals of Computer Course and attended awareness programs. Following his training, he was given the opportunity to enroll in the Employability Course by Enable India, who also provided him with an internship. This achievement marks another significant success for VMS, as it empowered Mubashir to regain independence, develop skills, and gain valuable professional experience, giving him hope for a brighter future.

## **Challenges**

Despite structured planning, several challenges were faced during the training and implementation process:

- **Finalizing Dates and Time**

Scheduling training programs was challenging due to students' personal, medical, and family constraints.

- **Sourcing Participants**

Identifying and reaching eligible participants in Kashmir was difficult due to geographical, social, and communication barriers.

- **Dropouts at Later Stages**

Some students dropped out during the final stages of the course due to family pressure, health issues, or lack of confidence.

- **Social Attitudes and Family Acceptance**

Social stigma and lack of awareness about low vision remained one of the biggest challenges. Many families are reluctant to leave their children for training, believing they could not manage independently.

- **Travel Difficulties Due to Low Vision:**

I face challenges while traveling, as I cannot recognize faces or read bus boards, which makes independent travel stressful and time-consuming.

- **Insensitive Behaviour and Lack of Awareness:**

Harsh behaviour from vendors, students, and society due to limited awareness of low vision creates emotional and practical challenges.

- **Different Types of Low Vision:**

Each learner has a different type and level of low vision, making assessment and individualized training essential but challenging.

- **Invisible Disability and Family Non-Acceptance:**

Low vision is often misunderstood because it is not always visible, leading to lack of family support and delayed motivation.

- **Emotional Stress and Motivation Issues:**

Many learners face stress and depression, requiring continuous counselling and motivation along with training.

## Outcomes

- Learners achieved increased independence in education, communication, and daily tasks.
- Confidence and self-esteem improved significantly.
- Trainees gained practical digital skills, including typing, MS Office, and internet use.
- Social interaction improved through digital communication.
- Some students resumed education and others started earning independently.

## Key Findings

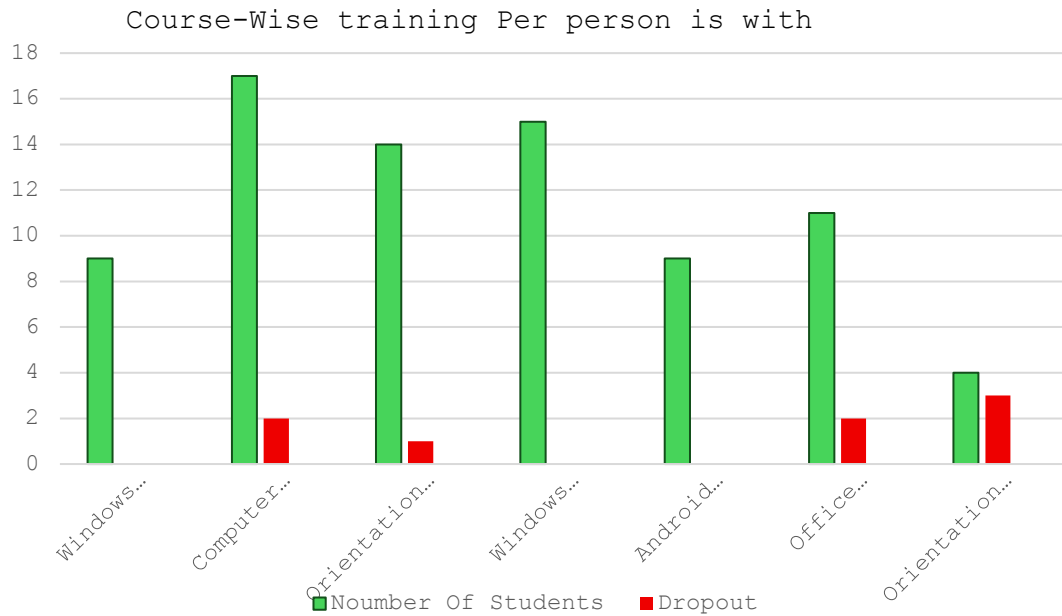
- Patience, empathy, and continuous motivation are key to successful outcomes.
- Practical, task-based training increases learner engagement and confidence.
- A supportive and inclusive environment helps overcome emotional, social, and family barriers.
- Skill-based training can bridge the gap between disability and independence.

### Course-Wise training Per person is with vision impairment

SI No.	Course Name	Number of Students	Number of Dropout.
1	Windows Accessibility Features For Low Vision	9	
2	Computer Fundamentals for	17	2

	Persons with Vision impairment		
3	Orientation to Computers for Persons with Vision Impairment	14	1
4	Windows Accessibility Features For Low Vision	15	
5	Android Mobile Training for Persons with Vision Impairment	9	
6	Office Productivity Course for persons with low vision	11	2
7	Orientation to Computers for Persons with Vision Impairment	4	3
Total	7	79	8

Upcoming Courses: 2



(Demonstration of the assesstive devices In Digital literacy computer lab(Iqrah Wali))



(Windows accessibility training for persons with low vision.)



(Demonetisation of A4 magnifier.)



(Reading without seeing workshop voluntary Medicare Society.)



Drug de Addiction workshop at Government Polytechnic College, Srinagar.

Mental Health Awareness Workshop at Paramount School

## VMS Low Vision Trainees Lead Mental Health Awareness Workshop at Paramount High School



Srinagar, Press Release:08-Dec-2025: Voluntary Medicare Society trainees, under the Community Project of the #SeeAMillion Initiative supported by Enable India, today on 8th December, 2025 organized a Mental Health Awareness Workshop at Paramount High School, Bemina, Srinagar. The trainees of the Office Productivity Course for Low Vision led the entire event. The workshop was fully planned and executed by the trainees. Their coordination, discipline, and clarity impressed the Voluntary Medicare Society management and the school administration. Guests and participants praised their professionalism and teamwork.

The event saw the presence of distinguished guests, including Prof. Masooda Yaseen, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Lone, Mr. Mohammad Shahid Khan, Chairman of the school, Ms. Shubeena Khan, Principal of the school, and Dr. Nazia Fayaz Baba. Their participation added depth and credibility to the

program. Ms. Saika Nazir Bhat, a VMS trainee, anchored the event with confidence and precision.

Key themes included understanding mental health, stress management, identifying early signs of emotional distress, and building healthy coping skills. Students took part in meaningful discussions and simple activities that helped them reflect on their emotional well-being and learn practical strategies they can use in daily life.

The Chairman of the school appreciated the initiative and stressed the need for such programs in student environments. Dr. Bashir Ahmad Lone highlighted the continued efforts of the Voluntary Medicare Society in digital literacy, confidence building, and community engagement for visually impaired and low vision trainees.

The workshop closed with encouraging feedback from all, and everyone appreciated the Low Vision trainees for successfully organizing the event.

## VMS Trainees Lead Drug De-Addiction Workshop at Govt. Polytechnic Bemina Under AMillion Initiative

Srinagar: Voluntary Medicare Society trainees, under the Community Project of the #SeeAMillion Initiative, organized a Drug De-Addiction Workshop on 9th December 2025 at Government Polytechnic, Bemina, Srinagar. Trainees of the Office Productivity Course for Low Vision led the session to raise awareness on substance abuse, prevention, and the value of mental well-being among students. Distinguished guests included: Dr. Muzaffar Khan, Clinical Psychologist, Drug De-Addiction Centre, JK Police, Eidgah Srinagar, Prof. Masooda Yaseen, Mr. Imtiyaz Ahmad Shaw, Principal, Govt. Women's Polytechnic, Bemina, Mr. Ayoub Bhat, Administrator, Voluntary Medicare Society, Moulana Nazir-ul-Huda, and Mr. Munir Ahmad Mir, Training and Placement Officer, Govt. Polytechnic for Women, Bemina. Before starting his session, Dr. Muzaffar Khan shared that the enthusiasm of the students motivated him to attend the workshop. He appreciated their punctuality, perseverance, and consistency. The workshop saw active participation from the staff of the VMS



Parivartan Centre, faculty of Govt. Polytechnic for Women Bemina, and students from the institution. Speakers addressed the rising challenge of drug addiction and stressed

highlighted the vital role of parents and religious leaders in guiding youth, shaping positive behaviour, and creating a safe environment that helps prevent substance abuse.

VMS trainees conveyed heartfelt thanks to all dignitaries, faculty members, and students for their support and participation, which helped make this awareness program impactful and successful.

The Principal of Government Polytechnic and other faculty members praised the VMS trainees for their efforts, noting their role in planning the event and conducting it successfully. The session

Conclusion

Computer education transforms the lives of persons with low vision by providing independence, confidence, and opportunities for growth. With structured training, assistive technology, and emotional support, learners can overcome physical, social, and psychological barriers. Case studies like Andleeb, Irtiqah, and Aabid demonstrate the real impact of such programs. Voluntary Medicare Society's initiatives highlight the importance of practical training, empathy, and motivation in empowering low-vision learners. By continuing to provide skill-based education and creating awareness, we can ensure that persons with low vision lead independent, confident, and fulfilling lives.

### **Acknowledgement and Professional Growth**

I express my sincere gratitude to **Enable India** for providing continuous opportunities that support the independence of persons with visual impairment. The collaboration between **Enable India** and **Voluntary Medicare Society (VMS)** has created meaningful pathways for education, skill development, and dignified livelihoods.

In 2025, I had the opportunity to participate in a **Training of Trainers (TOT)** program in Indore, which significantly enhanced my professional competence and strengthened my inclusive teaching practices. I was also given the opportunity to develop a **tactile model of the Windows 11 Start Menu**, which further improved my skills in tactile-based instruction for blind and low-vision learners.

These experiences have played a vital role in my professional growth and have reinforced my commitment to empowering persons with visual impairment through inclusive education and skill-based training.

**Together, we can empower individuals with low vision to see beyond their challenges and unlock their true potential.**