



## NIGERWIVES BRAILLE BOOK PRODUCTION CENTRE

P. O. Box 52335, Ikoyi, Lagos

**NEWSLETTER - FIRST ISSUE**

**September 1995**

(A Bi-Annual Newsletter to inform Friends of the Centre of its Progress, Activities and Needs.)

### AIM of the CENTRE:

To produce brailled books to help meet the reading needs of the Visually Handicapped in Nigeria, particularly students, to enable them compete on more equal terms with their sighted colleagues.

### MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-ORDINATOR:

It is exactly 6 months since our presentation ceremony in Corona School, Ikoyi, Lagos and we have indeed come a long way in that time. We have received an amazing amount and range of support from many people, companies & organisations, as you can see from reports later in this newsletter. We are working hard to ensure that our output encourages all our friends to continue to support us.

Our major initial problem was accommodation for the centre. We could not employ someone to man the centre until we had a proper base so all our production up to now has been on a voluntary basis, done in homes. We are happy to report that we have now acquired a portakabin which has been nicely rehabilitated and fitted with airconditioners - essential to keep the equipment in good condition. We were granted permission to site it in the NNPC compound at Falomo, Ikoyi. This is an excellent site from both the security and the accessibility angles. We are most grateful to all our donors and to NNPC for accommodating us. (Please see list of donors on page 2.) We do of course hope to get our own place eventually but we are very happy with what we have for the present.

We are now making arrangements to recruit a suitable administrator for the centre. Once this is done we will move the equipment to the centre and start full operation. We shall then be in a position to welcome friends to the centre to see for themselves what is happening there. Different aspects of our operations are discussed under various headings in this Newsletter. We welcome any comments or questions you may have on the centre and the reports contained in this Newsletter. We thank all those who have supported us thus far. We hope we can count on your continued support and interest and we trust we will make you proud of your association with us.

### FORMAL PRESENTATION:

The formal presentation of the equipment for the Centre was held on March 17, 1995 at Corona School, Ikoyi. A broad cross section of people representing many sections of the community were present including Diplomats, International organisations, Corporate Leaders, Businessmen and Women, educationists and individuals who were interested in what we are trying to do. This reflects the very varied business, social & community contacts of the members of Nigerwives who enthusiastically invited them to share the occasion with us and many of those who came honoured our invitation to become Friends of the Centre. Representatives of Nigerwives branches nation-wide were also present as this is a national Nigerwives project.

We were highly honoured to have Professor Chukwuemeka Ike - our Patron - and his wife present. His address was most encouraging and his wealth of experience both in education and in copyright and publishing will indeed be invaluable to the centre. He assured us of copyright approval for any of his books and he has already educated us on the copyright procedures we should follow. A brailled version of part of his novel *The Bottled Leopard* which is an SSCE set book was produced for the occasion with the braille printer. Guests were also able to try the equipment for themselves and print out messages in braille.

We were sorry that the donors of the basic equipment - Mr. & Mrs. Iardia of Spain - were not able to be present, though they were represented at the ceremony. Without them we would not have been able to make a start. We look forward to welcoming them to the centre some day.

Our chairman for the occasion was Dr. Masha, who is on the board of the Oshodi Vocational Centre for the Blind. We hope that, after seeing our own equipment, he will be able to convince the Oshodi Centre to acquire the same.

In her address the co-ordinator of the project - Jean Obi - gave a background to the project. Although the equipment is presently the first computer operated braille production equipment in the country she prayed that it would be just the first of

many. There was a tremendous need for brailled books and no one centre can possibly meet the need. She mentioned the need for co-ordination between groups seeking to assist various needs and expressed the hope that other groups or centres considering obtaining computer braille production would obtain the same type of equipment so that there could be maximum co-ordination and thus maximum benefit to the end users. She also mentioned the centre's need for a scanner which would reduce considerably the time spent in producing the master disks of books. Little did she expect that just one week later she would be holding the \$800 required to buy the scanner! (The Managing Director of Comerint - Nigeria was present at the ceremony. He must have been convinced that we were very serious about the project and within one week he in turn had convinced his head office to approve the donation of \$800 to buy the scanner.

After the formal part of the occasion, refreshments were served and guests and Nigerwives were able to discuss the project informally.

#### DONORS to the PROJECT:

At the presentation ceremony we did not intend to beg for donations though there was the opportunity to donate for those who wished to do so at that time. We believed that if we could convince people that we were taking the project very seriously then people would be willing to help us - and this has certainly proved to be true. We have received donations in cash & kind, big & small, from individuals & corporate bodies. Receipts have been issued for all money donations; letters of acknowledgement have been sent to all who have donated in kind. We are most grateful for all donations: money, items and time. All are essential to the progress of the project. Thank you one and all.

#### **DONORS to the CENTRE:**

<b>Corporate Bodies /Associations</b>	<b>Individuals</b>	<b>Gifts in Kind:</b>
Gov. Coll. Umuahia OBA ₦1,000	Mr. B. N. C. Uzochukwu ₦ 250	Computer & Printers - Mr. & Mrs. Ilardia
Fire Risk Engineering ₦ 5,000	Mrs. J. A. Ohiwerei ₦ 250	HP Scanner - Comerint (Nigeria)
Pan Ocean Oil ₦ 25,000	Mr. T. Cole ₦ 1,000	IBICO Binder - Ship & Shore Services
Glenyork ₦ 25,000	Mozella Ademiluyi ₦ 2,000	Portakabin - Litwin S. D. Nigeria Ltd
Cakasa ₦ 10,000	Mr. B. A. Osuide ₦ 1,000	Airconditioners - NNPC
Comerint(for Scanner) \$800	Dr. S. I. Laguda ₦ 500	Tables - NNPC
NAPIM ₦ 25,000	Mr. E. B. Bichetero ₦ 500	Portakabin foundation - Cappa
African Petroleum (AP) ₦ 100,000	Mrs. Audrey Okoro ₦ 250	Braillemaker Prof. Software - NIB
	Mrs. Sophia Amusi \$100	Guillotine - Nordic Women's Group
	Chief G. T. Grant ₦ 7,000	Resourcery - Technical Support
<b>Nigerwives Branches:</b>	Ms. Bimbola Johnson ₦ 5,000	Disks - Mrs. Glenda Masha
Kwara ₦ 700	Chief E. D. Akan ₦ 2,000	Disks - Mrs. Maegot Etiebet
Port Harcourt ₦ 500	Mrs. E. A. Oputa ₦ 2,000	Printing of Brochures - National Oil &
Benin ₦ 5,000	Anonymous ₦ 5,000	Marketing Co.
Akwa Ibom ₦ 1,000	Anonymous ₦ 5,000	
Aba ₦ 12,000	Ms. Beatrice Fisher ₦ 2,500	
Owerri ₦ 5,000	Mr. Kamal Boustani ₦ 25,000	
Ijebu-Ode ₦ 1,000	Mrs. M. A. Belo-Osagie ₦ 2,000	
Lagos ₦ 13,065	Dr. Lydia Monye ₦ 1,000	
	Dr. Wanda Alli-Balogun ₦ 600	
	Mr. Moses Agoh ₦ 5,000	

## PRODUCTION:

The stages of production are as follows:

- a) Scanning of the text to produce a word-processing file
- b) Editing the scanned file to correct errors and remove excessive visual formatting
- c) Production of brailled copies

We can now produce the unedited files in a word processing format quite quickly with the scanner - the scanner removes the necessity to type out the text. The quality of the scanned file depends on the print quality of the scanned book. Not many errors occur with a well printed book but many of the text books in use now are of poor print quality and consequently many errors occur in the scanning and recognition process. Fortunately the *spell-check* facility in the word-processing soft-ware identifies most of these errors. We require volunteers with computer skills and facilities to help with the editing. A few expatriate wives have already volunteered their editing skills and resources and we look forward to others joining them. This is something people can do in their own homes and time if they have the facilities. The brailled copies are produced from the edited files by the braille printer. NIB kindly bought us an updated version of the software required for use with the braille printer. This software can also produce Maths text but we are yet to experiment with this part of the soft-ware. So far we have produced the edited files and first copies of the following:

- 1) Textbook of Government for SSS by Dare & Oyewole
- 2) The Bottled Leopard by Chukwuemeka Ike
- 3) The Stillborn by Zaynab Alkali
- 4) New Practical English for JS3 by Ogundipe & Tregido

The following books have been scanned and are partially edited or waiting to be edited:

- 1) Effective English for SS1 by Montgomery, Okebukola & Bisong
- 2) Animal Farm by George Orwell
- 3) Christian Religious Knowledge for SS3 by Ilori, Adugbo, Odiase & Gizo
- 4) Social Studies for JS3 by Anikpo, Mohammed, Ezegbe & Salau
- 5) Nigerian Integrated Science for JS3 by SCAN
- 6) New Practical English for SS2 by Ogundipe & Tregido
- 7) New Practical English for SS3 by Ogundipe & Tregido
- 8) The Jero Plays by Wole Soyinka

We have written to all the publishers for copyright approval. We have so far had replies from Longmans(Nigeria) & University Press. They are very interested in what we are doing and have happily given permission. A Nigerwife is delegated to act as liaison with each publisher.

## LIAISON WITH SCHOOLS & STUDENTS:

Requests from schools will be co-ordinated by members of Nigerwives. Where possible a member who is either a teacher or parent at the school will be assigned as the liaison person but where this is not possible a person will be chosen who is in the locality of the school. This system will operate in all states where there are branches of Nigerwives. We will find an alternative in states where we have no branch. We feel it is important to have personal contact with the schools and the students. It is important to identify the actual books the students require rather than receive a global list for all students. The liaison officer will get to know the students and their requirements. A charge equal to the print price of the book will be charged even though the cost of production of braille books is obviously much higher than this. It is important though for students who can afford to, to buy their books as do their sighted counterparts. Where the liaison officer identifies that a student is unable to pay for some or all of his/her books, she will ask the Centre to arrange for a Friend of the Centre to sponsor the student's book needs. Some friends may wish to sponsor a needy student for a whole year or throughout his/her course, in which case we will arrange for the sponsor to receive copies of the student's reports.

## VISUALLY IMPAIRED GRADUATE EMPLOYEES:

For blind students, textbooks are a problem. For visually impaired graduates, employment is a problem because, in the words of the Chief Executive of Nigerian Breweries, 'I have found ways of employing suitably qualified physically disabled and deaf persons effectively but I cannot employ visually impaired graduates because I do not know how I can employ them effectively.' Many employers would agree with him. He suggested we should try to tackle this problem by employing a visually impaired graduate in our centre, and promised to assist. As a result a partially sighted graduate of Economics & Education who can no longer read

print has embarked on a year's in-service training with us. For the first three months, he attended an intensive course in braille & typing at Gindiri School for the Blind in Plateau State. He will now do in-service training in our centre and we hope that by the end of his 1-year program he will be much better equipped to work in an administrative position and that we will be in a position to advise would-be employers what additional equipment is necessary for them to employ visually impaired graduates effectively. Nigeria Breweries has promised to support us in this experiment.

#### VISIT TO THE NORDIC WOMEN'S GROUP:

We were invited to talk to the Nordic Women's group on July 5th and we had a most useful and enjoyable meeting with them. The following week some of the members came to see our equipment and some offered to help with the editing. They have collected some paper for us to use and they have also bought us a heavy duty guillotine which we badly needed to cut papers for printing. One of their members has taken a book to edit and there is the promise of others doing so when they return from their summer vacation. We look forward to their continued interest and support and hope that we can establish similar links with other women's groups.

#### MEMBERSHIP OF NABRACON:

The National Braille Council of Nigeria (NABRACON) was set up 4 years ago. Membership of Nabracon is open to any body or organisation involved in the production, use or teaching of braille. It is a co-ordinating body for braille related activities and it is also a member of ICEB - the International Council on English Braille. Our Centre has registered as a member of Nabracon. ICEB is holding a General Assembly in the UK in October and our co-ordinator, who is the secretary of Nabracon, and the President of Nabracon - a blind lawyer - will attend the Assembly through the generosity of British Airways who are kindly providing tickets to enable them attend. Our co-ordinator will be

able to interact with representatives of braille book production centres from other countries at the Assembly. Whilst in the UK she will also look into methods & equipment used by visually impaired graduates working there. British Council has identified some useful contacts to make in this connection. In addition she will visit some braille production centres there. We are indeed grateful to British Airways for making all this possible.

#### NEXT STEP FORWARD:

Our next step forward is to appoint an administrator for the centre and to get the centre fully operational. This should be achieved within the next 2 months. We will no doubt then find other items required for the centre. By November we expect to go into intensive production of copies of the completed books and increase the rate of scanning and editing of further books. We have already received quite a number of book lists. Once we increase the rate of scanning we will be in need of many more volunteers to help with editing. We are intensifying our efforts to contact groups through whom we can find more editors and we would welcome any suggestions or offers of help. We will be very happy to meet with individuals or groups who are interested.

As the schools resume we will get details of individual students and their needs and will also be looking for sponsors for those who need help with buying their books. We already have some offers of sponsors and we look forward to receiving more.

We have plans for having regular *open days* when friends can come and visit the centre and see for themselves how it is progressing. We will give details of this in our next newsletter. We are just at the beginning of the project and we look forward to your continued interest and support so that it may grow from strength to strength and make books as easily available for blind students as they are for sighted students.

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#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Jean Obi - Co-ordinator/technical  
 Maria Bayero & Jean Abili - PRO & Friends  
 Joyce Fatona & Boipelu Pariola - Finance  
 Doris Dada & Doris Fafunwa - Newsletter

Pat Ewurdje - Liaison with schools/students  
 Margarita Macebuh - Administration  
 Margaret Obosi - President, Lagos Branch  
 Joyce Obotette - President, National Nigerwives