



NIGERWIVES BRAILLE BOOK PRODUCTION CENTRE

P. O. Box 52335, Ikoyi, Lagos

NEWSLETTER - No. 2

March 1996

(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 nearly equal terms with their sighted colleagues.

THE MOVE to the PORTAKABIN:

The move to our well-outfitted Portakabin located in the NNPC parking lot, Falomo was accomplished in January. We have counters, shelves, desks and some chairs. Our AST computer system, scanner, Epson printer, Braille printer, stabiliser, book-binder and guillotine are now all installed and covered by insurance. In the photo below, some of our committee members are meeting in the empty Portakabin in 1995 before the installation of furniture and equipment.



ADMINISTRATOR & ASSISTANT APPOINTED:

Our administrator is Pearl Ajayi, a Nigerwife from St. Vincent's and Canada, whose background is teaching and administration. She welcomes visitors with warmth and enthusiasm. Drop by any time between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. weekdays. We plan to open the second Saturday of each month as well, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., starting in April.

We are also fortunate to have as Assistant, Abiodun Sulaimon, a partially-sighted young man with a Master's degree in Economics from University of Lagos. He recently finished a 1 year training programme which included an intensive course in typing and Braille at Gindiri School for the Blind, Plateau State. He has already been doing book-binding and proof-reading here at the Centre and will soon learn to use the computer so he can produce copies of the books. Here we have a photograph showing our staff in action in the Portakabin.



CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT by Jean Obi

First we must thank all those friends, both individuals and corporate friends, who have made donations in cash and kind to the Centre and in various ways have shown their support and interest. We also thank those who have visited the Centre to see what we are doing and those who come in periodically to give a hand with various jobs.

Production:

We had quite a lot of teething problems with the Braillemaker Translation software. During proof-reading it was discovered that apostrophes and quotation marks were not being properly identified and translated so a word such as *can't* would translate as *cant* and quotation marks just disappeared! In the UK or America one would just telephone the help-line whilst sitting in front of the computer and pretty soon a solution would be found. We had to do it the hard way by trial and error and we eventually found a solution. The completed disks had to be re-edited to clear the problems, slowing us down considerably. We are looking forward to using the new Duxbury software. In particular, it should make the translation of Maths - which is very tedious - somewhat easier to handle. We have just started to scan the *New General Maths* series and hope to have some volumes of this ready by September 1996, though it is difficult at this point to predict how long this will take.

International Conference:

I travelled to the UK last October, as mentioned in the last Newsletter, to attend the General Assembly of the International Council on English Braille (ICEB). I took with me Braille copies of the *Bottled Leopard* which we

reproduced on our recycled report paper. The delegates were most surprised at the idea of using already printed paper and I'm sure some of them will probably think of using the idea themselves, though it is much easier for most of them to acquire paper than it is for us. One of the people I gave a copy, who is a UK registered Braille proof-reader, has kindly returned comments to us and we have found them very useful in improving our presentation and identifying sources of error. I found that most of the countries represented were using a different Braille translation software, Duxbury, from the one we are using. Duxbury is reputed to be much more versatile and I am happy to report that the American Women's Club in Lagos learned of our interest in securing it and gave us the equivalent of the \$700 required to purchase it. We have just received the software and are in the process of installing it.

There were delegates from Braille production centres in different parts of the world and the contacts made at the Assembly will certainly prove very useful in the future.

Computer Training for Visually Impaired Graduates:

In our first Newsletter I mentioned that I would be looking into the various types of screen reader and voice synthesisers used by the visually impaired when visiting the UK for the ICEB Assembly, with a view to identifying the most suitable one for us to use here. The most suitable one was the Dolphin APOLLO 2 PC system. The UK High Commission Aid Project has kindly bought the system for the Centre with a 5-user site licence. This enables us to install it on a total of 5 computers at the Centre. We have just received it and are in the process of learning how to use it. We hope that by the time of the next Newsletter we will be able to ask companies to consider employing a suitably qualified visually impaired graduate. The Centre will give the prospective employee training in the use of the software; the company would agree to buy the software to install in its own computer and the employee would then be able to operate effectively in an administrative situation in the company. Most of the software operates with the DOS system, not Windows, so a high-powered computer is not required.

We need to acquire more computers for this training programme. We are aware that many companies and organisations are updating their computer equipment to higher powered systems and we are hopeful that some of the systems slated for disposal will be kindly donated to us. We will be delighted to hear from any who are so inclined and we can guarantee that such systems will be put to very good use. Can YOU help us in this way?

Working with other Groups/Organisations:

At the presentation ceremony a year ago, I mentioned that we would encourage other groups involved in providing reading materials for the blind to purchase the same equipment. We can then work together as a co-ordinated network. This wish is already becoming a reality. Our chairman on that occasion was the chairman of the management committee of the Vocational Centre for the Blind at Oshodi and they have now been able to order the same type of Braille printer and software as we have and hope to be operational before the end of this year. Likewise the sponsors of Gindiri Resource Centre have approved the purchase of the same equipment and they too hope it will be operational before the end of the year. ANWAB, a UK based charity which is raising money to set up a centre for the blind in Lagos, is also buying the same equipment. Earlier this month, we were privileged to have a visit from Mr. John Bush, a trustee of ANWAB, who came out to Nigeria to see things for himself. He was very impressed with the start we had made and looks forward to us giving a lead to ensure that all groups work together to maximise the use of the resources available. We fully intend to take up this challenge.

BOOK REQUESTS:

We have received book requests from quite a number of schools and are anxious to receive lists from any school that has blind students. Requests should be made early so that the books can be available by the next session starting in September. If you know of any such school - maybe your children go to such a school - please ask them to write to us at the above address and we will arrange for one of our members to liaise with the school on the provision of brailled books for the students.

BRAILLE BOOKS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE:

The list of books which can be produced on request now is as follows:

New Practical English for JSS Book 3 by Ogundipe & Tregido

New Practical English for SSS Book 2 by Ogundipe & Tregido

New Practical English for SSS Book 3 by Ogundipe & Tregido

The Bottled Leopard by Chukwuemeka Ike

Stillborn by Zaynab Alkali

Government for Senior Secondary Schools by Dare & Oyewole

Handbook on Special Education by Theresa Abang

The following books are presently out for editing:
Social Studies for JSS Book 3 by Anikpo, Mohammed & Ezegba

Animal Farm by George Orwell

CRK for SSS Book 3 by Ilori, Adugbo, et al

Jero Plays by Wole Soyinka

Commerce for SSS Book 2 by Omosanya & Winjobi

The following books have been scanned ready for editing:

Nigerian Integrated Science Book 3 by SCAN

She Stoops to Conquer by Oliver Goldsmith

Agriculture for Nigerian Schools Book 3 by Ogbezi & Adesiyi

New Practical English for JSS Books 1 & 2 by

Ogundipe & Tregido

New Practical English for SSS Book 1 by Ogundipe & Tregido

New General Maths for JSS Book 3 by Channon et al.

NIGERWIVES BRANCHES SUPPORT CENTRE:

The Centre is a NATIONAL NIGERWIVES project and we expect and receive support from individual Nigerwives and Branches in various parts of the country. Many branches donated at the presentation ceremony a year ago and we are looking forward to receiving further donations from the branches at the National AGM coming up later this month. Two branches have donated during the past 6 months. Ibadan sent a donation of N10,000 and Abeokuta N20,000. Abeokuta raised theirs at a luncheon last November where the guest speaker was Mr. Elijah Akinyemi, a blind graduate who works in the Special Education Unit of the State Ministry of Education. We look forward to more branches copying Abeokuta's lead and getting to know educated blind adults in their area. Such people are often in close contact with the younger blind students in the locality and will be a ready source of getting to know where the students are who need the books.

DONATIONS:

We have received the following donations since we issued our first Newsletter:

Nigerwives - Ibadan: N10,000

Nigerwives - Abeokuta: N20,000

Lagos Caledonian Society: N30,000

British Women's Group, Lagos: N100,000

American Women's Club, Lagos: N60,000 to enable us purchase the Duxbury Braille Translation software.

They also gave us some cartons of continuous thermoform paper which will be used for producing large print books for the partially sighted.

John Holt (Nig.) PLC: 15 cartons of old company reports. These are fine quality, heavy paper which is excellent for producing the brailled copies.

Miss. Raddon & Mrs. Wolfe, WAEC. London: A Visitors' Book

Better Living: 4 chairs

Nigerian Breweries PLC: A large quantity of old company reports.

UK High Commission Aid Project: Dolphin Apollo 2 voice synthesiser and screen reader software.

During the coming months we will invite representatives of the organisations and companies that have supported us in various ways to visit the Centre to see for themselves how we are using what we have been given.

OUR GREATEST NEED NOW IS FOR EDITORS:

Lack of editors is a major bottle-neck in our rate of production. We have had only a few offers of help with editing so far and of those, only two have returned the work. We urgently need volunteers who have computer skills and facilities (Word for Windows, WordPerfect 5.1 or inter-related software which can be saved or converted to WordPerfect) and are prepared to set aside say an hour a day or several hours a week for editing.

The scanned texts contain many scanning errors and the visual formatting such as varied fonts, extra spaces, boxes etc., has to be removed. We have prepared guidelines together with samples of unedited text and the equivalent edited text. Maybe you have computer literate children who could spend some time helping, especially during the forthcoming long holiday. It is a job that can be done on your own facilities in your own home. If you can help we would be very glad to hear from you. Telephone Jean Abili on 01-269-1405 or Doris Dada on 01-613-332, leaving your name and telephone contact and we will get back to you, or, if it is convenient, call at the Centre and leave your details with the Administrator. We will be very glad to hear from you.

OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP AT THE CENTRE:

We encourage visitors to drop by and get acquainted with our project, the staff and other volunteers. For those willing to lend a hand, we have at present twenty-four cartons of old company annual reports ready for staple removing (by hand) and then cutting to size by guillotine. We can chit-chat at the same time, as neither job taxes the brain! These are the sheets that will then be brailled for the finished product.

When we have more computers volunteers can also come in to help scan, produce and print.

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

Margaret Obosi - President, Lagos Branch

Joyce Obotette - President, National Nigerwives