

**BLIND SA
NPO 000-606**

ANNUAL REPORT

**AUDITED FINACAIL
STATEMEMTS**

1 APRIL 2006 – 31 MARCH 2007

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**SUBMISSION OF THE
ANNUAL REPORT
TO THE
EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY**

**"We made a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give"
Sir Winston Churchill**

Blind SA takes this opportunity to enlighten you on the significant issues of this financial year and the strategic targets we intend to accomplish. The survey of the Organisation's programme indicates a fairly good performance led by our most zestful President Miss Cathy Donaldson. Blind SA has kept alight the mission of passionately acknowledging and catering for the needs of a visually challenged society. Several of our past requirements have been looked into and decisions have been made on ascertaining that much will be accomplished this financial year. Highlights of the Organisation's activities for the previous financial year are reviewed and a glimpse into the future follows.

The Blind SA Governance is as follows:

1. HONORARY LIFELONG PRESIDENT

Miss C.E. Aucamp

2. MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: Miss C.J. Donaldson;
Vice President: Mr J.B. Jakavula;
National Treasurer: Mr F.A. Greeff;

Portfolios

Careers: Mr W.H. Taylor;
Information: Mr A. Vosloo;
Advocacy: Mr A.T. Steyn;
Braille: Mr C.J. de Klerk;
Student Bursaries and Youth Matters: Mr D. Naidu;

Committees

Constitutional Committee: Mr A.T. Steyn, Mr C. de Klerk, Mr J. du Preez;

Education Committee: Miss C.J. Donaldson, Mr A.T. Steyn, Mrs H. de Beer, Mr J. Bam, Mr J.B. Jakavula, Mr T. van Sittert, Mr W.H. Taylor and Mr S. Pelsler.

3. MEMBER ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTATIONS TO HEAD COMMITTEE

BWO Orion (Pretoria): Mr D. van Niekerk
Breede Valley (Worcester): Mr C. Vorster and Mr J. Botha
Egoli (Westonaria/Johannesburg): Mrs S. Bam
Free State (Welkom): Mrs C. Coffee
KwaZulu-Natal (Durban): Mr K. Shunmugam
Kondelelani Foundation (Nzehele): Mr O. Kwinda
Limpopo (Polokwane): Mr M.S. Ramabulana
Mpumalanga (Ermelo): Mr P. Mpokane
Nkosinathi Foundation (Port Elizabeth): Mr B. Skosana
Peninsula (Cape Town): Mrs V. Vosloo

It has been an incredible experience to work together as a team where each and everyone have played a significant role by providing the necessary selfless assistance.

The dreadful effects of crime did not leave Blind SA unaffected this year. Blind SA lost an employee, Miss Nicolene Bekker, to an astounding and unfortunate event. She was hijacked and killed as we kept on advertising her missing. God helped us in finding peace within ourselves and set her off to rest in peace with him.

Human Resources management is currently handled by the assistance of legal professionals on our governance along with a labour consultant keeping things in line with the relevant labour legislation.

In order to meet the needs of the students we have increased the study bursaries by 67% with the help of our valuable donors. Our Education Committee has never wavered from our pledge to educate and uplift those who have the potential and commitment.

From 2007 our budget has gone up by 55%, thereby increasing productivity to meet the needs of the blind society.

Since the demand has risen, we are looking forward to work on two projects within this financial year costing:

1. Building Extention: R2'500'000.00
2. ETC PED30 Braille Plate Embosser: R900'000.00

Blind SA is sending two of our managers, Mr P.R. Jordaan and Mr R. Lubbe, to the United States of America to add on to their expertise and familiarize themselves with the latest equipment in order to be in line with the latest technology.

Blind SA is considering taking up a project with KBB Design by looking into the needs of the visually challenged by figuring out their household needs. KBB Design is hoping to come up with ideas to make it easier for them by designing their own kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms in order to give them the privilege to be self-sufficient, with great pride and dignity.

In conclusion Blind SA thanks the Honourable Minister Dr Z.P. Jordan, Mr Mike Rennie and Mr Nic Cronjé (Department of Arts and Culture), Mr Thomas Matjeni and his team (National Treasury), our Auditor D. Gordon & Company for being our backup and support. Our heart felt thanks to Miss C.J. Donaldson and Mr D. Greeff for their loyalty in making Blind SA what it is.

Binu Sam
Chief Financial Officer
BLIND SA

**PRESIDENT'S
OVERVIEW**
Miss Cathy J Donaldson

1. INTRODUCTION

BLIND SA is a national organisation that operates in terms of the Nonprofit Organisations Act, the Public Finance Management Act and as a Public Benefit Organisation in terms of the Income Tax Act. This legislation calls for different types of reporting to the State and, while this report meets many of the requirements of the legislation, it is also a reflection of the past year's activities for the benefit of BLIND SA's members.

Over the past 61 years, BLIND SA has grown from a small organisation of the blind (virtually a consumer group) functioning in a tough, at times even hostile, environment of organisations for the blind (service providers) into a large, well-respected partner in the blindness service sector with an annual expenditure of over 10 million rand. As some service providers have fallen away or where services were inadequate, BLIND SA has become a service provider itself. It is however essential that it should also maintain its consumer-oriented character. In some ways, what BLIND SA does, is almost of less significance than what BLIND SA is: a body to be consulted as a voice of blind and partially sighted people and a body that can advocate effectively on behalf of this group as and when necessary.

2. RESTRUCTURING

After several years of consolidation, analysis of activities and proposals for change, reflected in previous annual reports and Presidential addresses, this year has seen a number of changes, which have been implemented. As with any other major change in life, the process has not been without pain and insecurity for many of the role-players. My hope is that the potential for growth and maturity inherent in such processes will be realised for the good of BLIND SA and the blind and partially sighted people of South Africa in the years to come.

A major change has been brought about in the Executive Committee of the Organisation. In future, each Executive member will have a specific area of responsibility in addition to his or her global responsibility for carrying out the decisions of the Head Committee and dealing with all relevant matters between the annual sessions of the Head Committee. Only three office-bearers, the President, Vice-President and National Treasurer, were elected nationally by the Member Organisations while a maximum of six portfolio holders were elected by the Head Committee to promote the various aspects of BLIND SA's activities.

Due to the post of the Director been made redundant, governance decided that all operational activities be dealt with by governance and that an indepth investigation will take place to restructure BLIND SA.

3. MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

BLIND SA has ten member organisations while BLIND SA acts as the voice of its members and to a large extent as the voice of other blind and partially sighted South Africans as well, the fact that its member organisations are autonomous and separately registered in terms of the NPO Act, make it essential that the member organisation leadership should also be fully informed of the needs, aspirations and abilities of their members. The member organisation should be strengthened, as this is the only growth point for the Organisation as a whole.

In the early days, a new member organisation was formed by a group of members seceding from an existing member organisation and even then the existing member organisation mentored and monitored the new member organisation for a year or two. It is clear that the Head Committee will have to devise a strategy for leadership training, and capacity building in new member organisation that are formed by a new group of interested people. Induction into the procedures, history and ways of BLIND SA is also most important.

In the year under review Nkosinathi Foundation, one of BLIND SA's member organisations, decided to disaffiliate from BLIND SA.

In the year under review the following new member organisations were formed, namely Vukulani MaAfrica (Soweto), Kondelelani Foundation (Nzhele) and Mpumalanga (Ermelo).

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF BLIND SA

Breede Valley: Tel: (023) 342-1579
BWO Orion: Cell: 082 808 2812
Egoli: Cell: 083 701 4246
Free State: Tel: (057) 352-3575
KwaZulu-Natal: Cell: 083 288 9099
Kondelelani Foundation: Cell: 076 983 2067
Limpopo: Tel: (015) 973-1545
Mpumalanga: Cell: 083 624 7210
Peninsula: Tel: (021) 442-8435
Vukani MaAfrica: Cell: 082 962 9887

I herewith include extracts from the reports by the Braille Services Manager as well as those of the different Portfolio holders.

4. BRAILLE SERVICES (Braille Services Manager, Mr Philip Jordaan)

Braille is the only true means of literacy for blind people. It is therefore understandable that the members of BLIND SA are justifiably proud and grateful when reflecting on the production and distribution of braille by the Organisation and the freedom it has brought to blind people. It is also understandable that the Organisation's interest goes far beyond the production of braille.

Training

All data-typists were trained in the use of DBTWin 10.5, and are being retrained in MSWord. The Duxbury 10.6 was ordered, and will be installed shortly. Susan van Wyk also conducts proofreader/data-typing workshops on a regular basis, and the introduction of UEBC and subsequent training should keep us very busy in the coming year.

Salaries

Management approved an above-inflation salary increase and a 13th cheque for 2006, and we are drastically addressing the salary back-log. We believe that our salaries is on par with the other service providers.

Braille Production

Production

In this past year we produced 55 396 new master pages (2005/06: 42 574; 2004/05: 61 406) and duplicated 3 973 608 Braille pages (2005/06: 3 016 066; 2004/05: 2 813 785; 2003/04: 3 813 147). Master page and duplication page production increased by 30%, with duplication pages reaching a new all-time record, breaking the 2003/04 record by more than 160 000 pages! This was the fifth production record in the past ten years.

Master cost:

Cost per Braille master page is R38,19 and duplication cost is 31c per page. We charge as follows: Master page R50 (R25 if received electronically); Duplication page 40c each. Individuals pay 20c per page, the cost of the Braille paper.

Free Braille Magazines

We produce four magazines for Blind SA: Braillorama, Blind SA News and Braille Trumpet (monthly); Braillorette (bi-monthly), the Imfama for SANCB (3 editions per year) and the bi-monthly Vuk'uzenzele for GCIS (Government Communications and Information Systems). The ever-increasing readership of our magazines stabilised over the past year, we cleaned up the distribution lists, with a consequent small drop in production (9%) to 1,995 m. pages in the past financial year.

Estimated cost to Braille Services: 1 700 master pages and 1,41 m. braille pages at R505 000 (down from an estimated R602 000 in the previous year - due to higher production at lower unit costs).

Cost to SANCB (2 editions of Imfama): 324 000 braille pages at R164 000.

Cost to GCIS (Vuk'uzenzele): 216 000 braille pages at R126 000.

Individuals and Students

Subsidised Braille printing for individuals and students is our core business. All Braille is charged at 20c per Braille page, meaning we recover cost of material only. New master pages were 20 200 with nearly 372 000 duplication pages brought total cost in excess of R900 000 for the past financial year.

Schools and Institutions

We saw a marked increase in school text book production, as Braille Services were appointed as an official supplier by the National Department of Education for the roll-out of Grade 10 (2006/07), and Grade 8, 11 and 12 LTSM (learner teacher support material) over the next few years. Nearly 20 000 master pages and 550 000 duplication pages were produced.

Backup of Masters and Server

After a visit to the National Library for the Blind in Grahamstown, we started to backup all relevant titles to our server. As soon as this is finished, an updated booklist will be produced.

The server also gets backed up on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

Paper Sales

We again generated a fair amount of income through the sale of Braille paper:

Paper	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2003/04
Camelot 135gsm	2 757 kg	3 412 kg	5 926 kg	5 193 kg
Computer (boxes)	537	820	524	298

The price of flat-sheet Braille paper was constant over the past 3 years, the current price of R22 per kg (26c per sheet VAT incl.) was set in 2004.

Fan-fold: The price of computer Braille paper is R285 (VAT incl.) per box of 1'000 sheets.

Equipment

An order was placed for a new ETC PED30 plate embosser, and a R450'000 deposit was paid. We also started with a fundraising drive towards an additional high-speed paper embosser - the BrailloNorway 440SW. We hope to install both these machines during the coming financial year.

Extensions to building

Works drawings were done by Cas Nel Architects and provisional costing is around R2,5 m. If Blind SA

can raise these funds and we can complete the extensions over the next year or two, Braille Services should have sufficient operational space for the next 10-15 years.

Conferences and Workshops

The usual Braille SA meetings were attended by Susan van Wyk (Braille Technical Advisor) and Johannes Dube (African Braille Specialist), with great success.

Braille SA (Portfolio Holder, Christo De Klerk)

Blind SA hosted the 39th meeting of Braille SA which took place at the Parktonian Hotel on 23-24 October, 2006. That venue was chosen, as it was correctly anticipated that it would be a large meeting. It turned out to be the biggest meeting of Braille SA to date with delegates from seven schools for the blind, one disability unit from the University of Cape Town, Blind SA, the SANCB, the SA Library for the Blind and Deaf-Blind SA being represented. This large attendance was most encouraging as the widest possible participation in Braille SA's work is essential. This meeting was a memorable event, as it was the 20th anniversary of Braille SA as well as the 60th anniversary of Blind SA. These two events were celebrated at a cocktail party on the evening of 23rd October. I wish to express our sincere gratitude to Blind SA and its staff and helpers for the party and all the arrangements and assistance during the meeting. Blind SA was again represented by Miss Susan van Wyk, Mr Johannes Dube and myself. Our braille instructor, Miss Tracy Smith, also attended the meeting as an observer. The newly appointed director of the S A Library for the Blind, Mr Francois Hendrikz, also attended and made valuable contributions to the meeting. We were pleased to receive a visit by three people from a firm called Media Works who are working on an exciting braille project. They are developing adult education courses in English and mathematics for blind people and will be producing course material in braille and on CD-ROM. They brought along samples of their work for our evaluation and have made it available to our braille instructor to field test. The implementation of unified braille codes in the first three grades at schools at the beginning of 2008 is on track, but there is a lot of work required to make it happen. Much material for young beginners must be produced in unified braille codes. The SANCB's English magazines will also now be produced in the Unified English Braille Code. Much work is required to promote awareness and knowledge of the unified codes.

The next meeting of Braille SA took place in Cape Town on 12-13 April, 2007. Blind SA was represented by Miss Susan van Wyk, Mr Johannes Dube and myself. It turned out to be the largest meeting of Braille SA to date with good participation from schools for the blind and two disability units. The much wider participation is indeed most encouraging. Most of the focus of the meeting was on the introduction of the unified braille codes in the junior grades at school which is still on track for 2008. The training workshops for braille teachers will take place at Optima during the week of 17-21 September. Braille production houses have been requested to produce any material for young readers in the UEBC, so that there will be sufficient reading material for learners who learn this system.

A workshop of the committee for African languages took place at Optima towards the end of May to rework the Tsonga grade 2 system. Some changes to the Venda grade 2 system will also be investigated by Mr Tshiovhe and Venda readers. A few changes to the Afrikaans grade 2 system have been implemented: the deletion of the contractions for "el", "ver" and "deur" after the beginning of a word. It was resolved that a braille bulletin will be issued by the Braille Consultant twice yearly after each meeting of Braille SA to make people aware of any changes and matters relating to braille. The first bulletin is in its draft form and will be published shortly.

Braille SA tasked a committee consisting of Dr Obert Maguvhe, Mr Francois Hendrikz and myself to investigate the future structure and format of Braille SA. It was felt that it might be better to structure in a similar manner to other braille authorities such as BAUK and BANA, as it might mean greater legitimacy for Braille SA, assist with funding and resolve copyright issues if Braille SA were to function as an independent unit. A telephone conference took place on 20 May to discuss the matter. Those taking part were Dr Maguvhe, Mrs Jill Wagner, Miss C Donaldson, Mr Hendrikz and myself. It was soon clear that an impasse would be reached, as the representatives from the SANCB, in my opinion, were unwilling to entertain any argument which might lead to Braille SA gaining its independence. It was resolved that Mr Hendrikz would make available a draft business plan which would be completed, submitted to Braille SA and then to the SANCB and, should the SANCB not see its way open to play the role set out therein, the option of independence of Braille SA could be further investigated.

Duxbury Braille Translation Tables (Portfolio Holder, Christo de Klerk)

My colleague, Miss Christine Opperman has modified the Afrikaans braille translation table to implement the above-mentioned changes and the table is currently being distributed by the Braille Consultant. I have created translation tables for Unified Afrikaans and Unified Xhosa/Zulu. I shall attend to the other languages as time permits. It must be noted that, in order to produce the unified codes, it is necessary to upgrade to version 10.6 of the Duxbury Braille Translator. Braille Services has installed the upgrade with the help of Miss Susan van Wyk.

Braille Awareness (Portfolio Holder, Christo de Klerk)

A press release about braille and Braille Services was issued by Head Office to help create greater awareness about braille focusing on International Braille Day on 4th January. Probably resulting from the press release I was approached for a number of radio and press interviews.

Meeting of Braille Production Units (Portfolio Holder, Christo de Klerk)

I was invited by the Blind SA delegates on the education committee to attend a meeting of production units in my capacity of Blind SA's portfolio holder for braille. The meeting took place on 25 October, 2006 at the premises of the SANCB. The main topic of discussion centred around problems in producing enough braille material timeously for learners in schools. The main problems identified included late availability of books and orders and a lack of capacity at production units. A strategy was worked out to address these issues with the Minister of Education.

5. CAREERS (Portfolio Holder, Willem Taylor)

Network with Organisations "for" and "of" the Visually Impaired

At the meeting of the Executive Committee of Blind SA in December 2006 it was decided to get the careers project on track by means of networking with other organisations. Letters were sent to all organisations "of" and "for" visually impaired persons requesting them to assist Blind SA by providing information regarding vacancies as well as the names of candidates looking for work. These letters were also sent to the affiliates of Blind SA.

It appeared later that these organisations only passed this information on to their members resulting in many telephone calls and e-mail messages to writer with requests for assistance.

A second letter was then written to the same organisations to clarify the matter. At time of writing this report no reaction was received. It is also a pity that none of the affiliates of Blind SA took the trouble to respond to this letter. Visually impaired persons as well as those rendering services to them should understand that it is impossible for one single person to deal with such a great task alone.

Requests

Requests received were for change of employment and even for employment for the first time. Also, there were requests from employed persons who only knew uncontracted braille and from those who needed programmes to assist them to gain access to computers again after having lost their sight.

Two other interesting cases were, a person who is employed by Spoornet has lost part of his vision and are victimised by his immediate seniors with the hope that he will get himself declared as unfit for work. This matter has been referred to the CEO of Transnet, Me Maria Ramos, and to the Minister of Labour, Minister Ndladlana for further action.

Another person is a teacher who lost his sight and was told by the Dept. of Education that the department does not have the skills to train him for another position within the Department of Education. This matter has been referred to Minister Pandor, Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour, Minister Ndladlana, for further action.

Physiotherapy

The Executive Committee also requested at the December 2006 meeting that the process started by the physiotherapists, should be taken forward. The physiotherapists agreed that the matter can only be driven if there are suitable candidates available. The case of Mr Manders who visited call centres to try to make it accessible for visually impaired persons, was quoted as example. The moment Mr Bam proved that visually impaired persons could work in a call centre the question came: "Where are the candidates?" Unfortunately there were none.

Requests to enrol disabled learners for courses

A request was received from the Boston College to recommend 14 students for enrolment for a business management course. At that time the college had already 48 disabled students and the other 14 positions had to be filled. Through writer's correspondence with the college it was found that the college could accommodate partially sighted persons but not blind persons because they had no facilities for blind persons.

This once again proved that even training institutions have no idea of the needs and problems of blind persons and therefore get terrified when they are confronted with this matter. In another situation a similar request was received by which a person would receive training at ESCOM with a grant for six months. After the six months another six months of practical training at ESCOM would follow, also with a grant and the possibility of a placement. A partially sighted person from the Northern Cape was recommended and at time of writing no news had yet been forthcoming.

Available Posts

Several vacancies were sent to the careers officer for passing on to candidates. The information was passed on to candidates who were known to him. Unfortunately this is the problem, namely that there is no list of candidates waiting for employment and this makes it difficult. In this way positions for blind persons are lost. In this regard affiliates can take the lead and provide writer with information.

Call Centres

This career still has a long way to go. It appears that most call centres find it better to employ blind persons for outbound work probably because they think blind persons can not handle incoming calls. The employees are then part of a system in which a number of successful calls must ensure a fixed income to the employer. Should this not happen the persons loses his work. Mr Vosloo from Cape Town proved with great success that incoming calls can be handled. Therefore he assists Mr Taylor, careers officer, with these placements.

Placements

No placement list has been received from any of the affiliates, no placements have taken place.

6. STUDENT BURSARIES AND YOUTH MATTERS (Portfolio Holder, Dharashan Naidu)

Schools

During our last meeting, held in January, it was noted that a number of our schools are not doing enough in promoting our bursary fund, and some of the various competitions that we hold for students. From my interaction with a number of blind students, it has become evident that some of them are not even aware of the student and youth function of blind South Africa. We have sent a number of letters to the various schools informing them about competitions, student bursaries, as well as contacted them via phone with very little joy. It is in my opinion that other avenues need to be explored in this regard. It would be a shame that fellow blind people should suffer at the expense of schools that do not inform them as to what is out there. It should be noted that not all schools have reacted in this manner and some applications have been received.

Education

As the meeting would be aware, the criteria for a new applicant to receive one of our bursaries has been increased to 60% and above. It has been disappointing to note that the standard of applicants have dropped. I am not sure if it's the standard of education taught in schools, good candidates are just not informed about our bursaries, or if there is just a general decline in the education system. From the various media reports widely available one may tend to agree with the latter. This is of great concern for me as further education is vital for one to find employment in this country. This is not easy for the general public and I am sure 10 times more difficult for our members. Your comments and suggestions as to what we can do about this are welcome.

Eye conditions

It has been policy for Blind South Africa to have a criteria which is 6 over 60 for applicants who may qualify for a student bursary. It has been brought to my attention by the students as well as parents of these applicants concerns around this matter. Many of these individuals argue that some of these eye conditions such as "RP" or tunnel vision are not taken in to account. Even though the candidate sees more than 6 over 60 they do not have side or peripheral vision. It is in my opinion that the constitution committee discusses the matter.

Workshops

The student and youth team have not focused on any workshops this year as it was felt that there is an overlap between us and the education committee. It is therefore recommended that all workshops involving youth and students should be handled by this group. It is in my opinion that large costs can be saved in this regard.

Braille

This issue is one of those that can be raised by the education committee or the youth and students committee. After some investigation by myself through contacting students and 2 universities it was gathered that blind students are not encouraged to use braille in university. I understand the notion of wanting blind students to use computers as it is vital for them when entering the open labour market however; it is in my opinion that one should have a choice with regards to the way that examinations are conducted. Braille is a recognized means of writing and it is time that we make the universities aware of this. If we do not get any satisfaction then further steps should be taken against such institutions. I was once told that it was very costly to employ transcribers and other students were being used to perform such roles. I find this unacceptable and the matter requires further investigation. It should be noted that not all universities may adopt this approach. It is recommended that a letter be sent to all these institutions informing them about the use of braille and take the process from there.

Member Organisations

It should be noted that I have had very little or no contact with Member Organisations regarding youth matters. This is a concern for us as the executive committee as the youth are the future. It is recommended that a telephone conference be held with the youth representatives from each member organisation and me to discuss relevant issues. In this way we would be informed about the activities going on in each province as I am sure they are.

BURSARIES PAYOUTS:

23 Continuation bursaries = R66 000,00

19 New bursaries = R95 000,00

9 Training bursaries = R13 500,00

Total 51 Bursaries = R174 500

7. INTEREST-FREE LOANS (Portfolio Holder, Raymond Aukett)

In compiling this report for the year under review I came to the conclusion that as a result of more expensive items the loans fund could not help many of our members during this year. However we did approve 11 loans.

Financial Status:

Loans Fund:

Revolving Credit: R150 000.00

Payouts: R33 658.00

Bank Charges: R1 559.00

Total: R126 711.03

Bad debt: R16 280.00

Repayments: R59 489.00

Funds available in revolving credit: R3 970.94

Emergency Fund:

Revolving Credit: R20 000.00

Payout: R7 800,00

Funds available in emergency fund: R12 200,00

8. INFORMATION (Portfolio Holder, André Vosloo)

During the past year I have again strived to try and get much needed information to blind and partially sighted people who do not always have access to it. I have tried to do this through various email lists and also through the various magazines of Blind SA. I have also received many telephone calls from people who needed information about a wide variety of services for the blind. I referred all these callers to the relevant service providers in the blindness field and assisted them where possible.

Magazines of Blind SA:

One of the main ways through which information is spread to blind people is via our various magazines. I thank the Editors of the magazines for their hard work to ensure that the magazines are interesting and informative. Thanks also to the staff of Blind SA who go to great lengths ensuring that the magazines are circulated on time. Your hard work is being appreciated. Below are the reader statistics for the various magazines:

* Braillorette: 763;

* Brailorama: 366;

* Braille trumpet: 1 469;

* Blind SA Newsletter (print edition): 600.

* Blind SA Newsletter: 737

I have also dealt with various enquiries from the print media asking whether they can publish articles that appeared in our various magazines.

Blind SA Website:

The new Blind SA website is very exciting and informative. Given Gain has finally been appointed as our web hosting company and this brought about some exciting changes. It is now possible for prospective donors to donate on line and all our monthly magazines are available for download from the website. Some of the staff members have been trained to put information on the site.

Needs Assessment:

No interest was shown in the questionnaires circulated by Blind SA and it was decided to disband the Needs Committee. This is a very sad state of affairs and not a very good reflection on co-operation between the various member organisations of Blind SA.

Co-operation with Member Organisations:

I would like to call on all member organisations to help with the gathering and spreading of information. I regret to have to inform the Head Committee that feedback from member organisations have been very poor and in a lot of cases non-existent. This is something that will have to receive attention and I call on all member organisations to assist. More attention should be given to ensure that member organisations are active again, thereby ensuring service delivery to all members of the blind community.

9. ADVOCACY (Portfolio Holder, André Steyn)

It is clear that advocacy cuts right across every aspect of the life of blind people. It is necessary that there should be a close co-operation between all the portfolios of BLIND SA.

BLIND SA must ensure that government and other semi-state organs as well as the business sector know that it can speak on behalf of blind people and BLIND SA must be reckoned with. Unfortunately, the government regards the SANCB as the only mouthpiece of blind people and only consults with the SANCB in regard to matters concerning blind people. BLIND SA should devise strategies to position itself to make it known to the government that the SANCB is not the only organisation who can speak and act on behalf of blind people. This matter must be discussed by the Executive Committee and the Head Committee.

10. EDUCATION (Chairman, Cathy Donaldson)

Visits to Schools

Various meetings were held by the committee to discuss serious problems of the visually impaired learners. A number of visits took place during the year under review to schools for the visually impaired to investigate a number of problems which were brought to education committee's attention.

Attending of Courses

Two people, Miss Tracy Smith and Mrs Heila de Beer, attended a course that was given by experts from Sweden on Special and Inclusive Education.

Newsletter

The Education Committee of Blind SA took the initiative to start a newsletter for parents of visually impaired children and the idea of starting such a newsletter is to try and form a network for parents of visually impaired children.

Information for the Department of Education and other relevant bodies

Information for the department of Education and other relevant bodies were compiled in the form of memorandums in which all the problems were raised to give visually impaired children quality education.

Think Tank

On 9-10 September 2006 a think tank was held in Pretoria, which was arranged by the SANCB, Blind SA and SANABPP.

This think tank was a great success and a number of ideas and decisions were taken for implementation by the end of October 2008.

11. AWARENESS (Project Leader, Sanette Jordaan)

Blind SA started with an awareness programme at schools in the Johannesburg and Pretoria area. The purpose with the awareness programme is to make sighted learners aware of blind people and blindness. We tell them how a blind person would like to be treated and "that a blind person is not different from a sighted person, they just can't see" and that it can happen to any one at any time. We tell them how important it is to look after your eyes. And if you are aware that your sight is not as good as it should be, to please tell someone about it and get help.

We visited 20 schools in the year under review and we think that the programme is very important to make learners aware of blind people and that they do not need to be afraid of a blind person and that they should feel comfortable to assist them when necessary. The response that we got from the children and teachers were overwhelming and we know that we did reach our goal with the presentations.

The following schools gave us generous donations:

Laerskool Florida, Laerskool Dr Havenga, Laerskool Fairlands, The Christian Academy Private School, Silverfields Primary School, Horison View Primary School, Laerskool Voorbrand, Norwood Primary School, Rivonia Primary School, Laerskool Piet van Vuuren, Laerskool Ebenhaeser and Hoërskool Zwartkop. Our sincere thanks to these schools.

12. FUNDING

Being a non profit organisation with particular obligations towards blind and partially sighted people of South Africa, BLIND SA could not exist without the voluntary effort of its members and its friends and the financial support of its donors and funders. We thank each and every one for this support and in particular the many thousands of individuals who make direct and regular payments to BLIND SA, the national Department of Arts and Culture, The Donner Family Charitable Trust, Rainbow Farms (PTY) LTD, African Oxygen, Holcim South Africa (PTY) LTD, The Carl & Emily Fuchs Foundation, The Ghoors Charitable Trust/GEM Furnishers (PTY) LTD, Pioneer Foods (PTY) LTD, The Ellering Holdings, Grant Thornton, Protea Hotels & Inns (PTY) LTD, Hans Marensky Holding (PTY) LTD, Anglo Gold Ashanti Fund, The Caxton Group, Wimpy Charitable Trust, Barrow Construction, C T P Limited, The Nussbaum Foundation, Spartan Truck Hire (PTY) Ltd, The Hermann Ohlthaver Trust and Network Healthcare Holdings Limited (Netcare).

13. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Blind SA has a chief financial officer, Mr Binu Sam, who takes control of all financial operations and affairs.

14. BEQUEST OFFICER

Mrs Gloria de Koker our bequest officer is a compassionate person who does wonderful and constructive work amongst the elderly population.

15. BRAILLE INSTRUCTOR

Our braille instructor, Tracy Smith, is catering for the needs of previously disadvantaged communities. These lessons are presented free of charge and the learners are extremely excited and enthusiastic.

16. PREMISES

Blind SA is in a process to try and expand its current buildings in order to create more floor space to cater for the ever growing demand for braille and services. The process to find funding for the project is under way and we hope that suitable funding could be secured to put the project in motion.

17. CONCLUSION

As I conclude my Annual Report as the President of BLIND SA, I wish to pay tribute to every person who has assisted in carrying forward the ideals and tasks of BLIND SA. The leaders at national and member

organisation level, the staff and numerous volunteers at national and member organisation level, and our numerous members throughout the country have worked as a collective to promote the interests of blind and partially sighted South Africans in the most momentous and exciting decade of South African history. Let us not squander the fruits and opportunities of democracy by concentrating on the challenges only.

Cathy Donaldson
President of BLIND SA

STATUTORY MANDATE MISSION AND VISION

1. EXTRACT FROM THE BLIND SA CONSTITUTION

1.2 Blind SA is a body corporate having perpetual succession whose assets exist independently of those of its members.

1.3 Neither the profits nor the assets of Blind SA are distributable amongst its members.

1.4 Blind SA is an organisation not-for-profit in terms of the Nonprofit Organisations Act, no 71 of 1997.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Blind SA are to promote the interests of all blind people by:

2.1 Combating poverty.

2.2 The empowerment of blind people by amongst others the provision of braille, the distribution of information and the provision of other development services. Members of member organisations of Blind SA enjoy preference.

2.3 Acting as a pressure group with regard to any matter concerning blind people.

3. AREA OF OPERATION AND FUND-RAISING

Blind SA provides services and raises funds within the Republic of South Africa and elsewhere.

4. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Blind SA is to empower blind and partially sighted people to become economically self supporting and to live a full and meaningful life as citizens of South Africa.

Furthermore also to provide blind people with quality braille **in the language of their choice** at an affordable price.

PROGRAMME/ACTIVITY PERFORMANCE

Service delivery and programme performance have quite substantially been covered under the president's overview. She has referred in some details to all the Blind SA service delivery activities including braille and the production of braille.

1. THE PRODUCTION OF BRAILLE

The production of braille in all eleven official languages is a core function of Braille Services of Blind SA and we include an extract of our Strategic Plan regarding this aspect as well as the sale of braille paper.

2. EXTRACT FROM STRATEGIC PLAN

Braille transcription

Key objective	Strategy	Output	Service delivery indicator	Service delivery target or milestones
Keep braille affordable to blind individuals and students	Recover max 1% of cost from client	Recover 20c per braille page	No transcription increase	Implement over 2 year period; year 3 onwards = 1% of cost
Continuous braille production to schools for the blind	Recover full cost from client	Contact Schools for the Blind and Provincial Departments of Education-explain the actual cost of braille to maximize school textbook production	Work through National Department of Education as contact with Provincial Departments and schools	Ongoing process
Braille magazines (free of charge)	Supply information/entertainment to the blind: to most braille readers this is the only braille they receive on a regular basis free of charge esp. in rural areas and on the African continent	Current production is around 1,6 million braille pages, which amounts to +- 65% of free magazine output per year in Africa. We simply must: Continue this service; Increase current readership; Keep service free of charge, etc.?	Find a sponsor: Current cost is +- R500'000 per year (12,5% of budget); DAC to assist Braille Services in identifying a Gov. dept. to assist us to access funding to sustain this vital service, possibly US Aid, European Union, transformation/access to information funding	A.S.A.P.

BRAILLE PAPER: SALES

Key objective	Strategy	Output	Service delivery indicator	Service delivery target or milestone

Sustain current levels of braille paper sales	Effective marketing through SA National Council for the Blind; Own marketing: directly to consumers--through braille magazines to individuals; through post/e-mail/fax to schools/univ.	Max. 12'000 kg guillotined, wrapped labelled, packed per year	25-40% mark-up on certain grades; Ensure that our price is not more than 10% cheaper than Pioneer Printers, the other supplier to the market in SA. Turn around time: max 3 working days	On going targets are currently reached
Increase current levels	Effective marketing through SA National Council for the Blind; Own marketing: directly to consumers through braille magazines to individuals; through post/e-mail/fax to schools/univ.	Unlimited Outsource to other printing/paper suppliers	Difficult to administer. This is unfortunately not a core business, as current floor space does not allow us to handle volumes in excess of 1'000 kg per month	New building A.S.A.P.
To convert braille paper reels to continuous fan-fold for braille computer printers	New building with bigger floor space: Purchase paper converter machine; train 2 members of staff	Convert around 6 000 kg of paper for sale to other users	Current cost is R38 per 1 000 sheets, i.e. 25% of value added to raw product	New building A.S.A.P.

BRILLE PAPER: OWN CONSUMPTION

Key objective	Strategy	Output	Service delivery indicator	Service target or milestones
To convert braille paper reels to continuous fan-fold for braille computer printers	Use same machine/process as mentioned above	Convert around 3 000 kg of paper for in-house use	Conversion cost is R38 per 1 000 sheets, i.e. 25% value added to raw product current	New building A.S.A.P.

The institution will pursue the achievement of the following key objectives:

Expenditure

Braille transcription: subsidies to Blind Individuals and Students

Key objective	Strategy	Output	Service delivery indicator	Service target or milestones
Contain braille master page cost	Scan certain documents in	Labour Saving 20-25%; Paper	Retrain data-typists on scanner	Ongoing

(currently @ R50 per page)	stead of retype; Proofread once only	saving of 33% per scanned document	to increase current effectiveness	
Upgrade current programmes and introduce Unified English Braille Code (UEBC) in production process	We will be the first SA producer to introduce UEBC (English). Are currently in the process to adapt this for the African languages as well	UEBC training and production, as this will become the international Braille standard.	Finish new translation tables: 6 months, staff training: 12 months, full production: 24 months	ongoing.

Braille transcription: Publications Free Braille Magazines

Key objective	Strategy :	Output	Service delivery indicator	Service target or milestones
Find a sponsor to carry the cost of the project, while increasing current magazine readership	Dept. Arts & Culture to assist Braille Services to identify possible (overseas) sponsor or other gov. dept.	Increase current readership of 2'500 subscribers to 5'000	Current cost is 12,5% of budget, i.e. R500'000	A.S.A.P.

Extension to Current Building; Erection of a New Building

The current building at 102-104 8th Avenue, Mayfair, Johannesburg, was purchased in 1979. It served us well over the past 25 years, and constant upgrades under-planning ensured that we handled ever-increasing production levels as well as can be expected.

Over the past 10 years though, we saw a marked increase in literacy (and training) levels of blind people in South Africa (and indeed in Africa). This directly led to an equal increase for the need for braille, and we geared ourselves to address this new demand:

1997: Retraining of all datatypists in the latest version of WordPerfect 6.0 and Duxbury Braille Translator software; MS Word retraining in 2006, Introduction of new Braille Translation Software for use with UEBC (Unified English Braille Code) and training 2007/08.

1998: Introduction of the Heidelberg self-feeder Braille plate duplicator, the first in South Africa. This machine is used for magazine output

2001: Introduction of the ETC BraillePlace 300 high-speed braille paper printer from the USA, for increased text book output.

The above enabled us to increase production levels from around 1,8 million pages per year to 3,8 million per year (with the same number of staff!). We do now however, realise that we need to substantially increase current floor space to handle any future increase in production - production that we reckon to grow at an estimate of at least 15-25% per year.

This means that we have to at least treble our current floor space from the existing 800 square meters to at least 2 400 square meters. As our current premises are developed to its maximum, we urgently need to:

Extend the current buildings. Architect drawings show that we can achieve an additional 200 square meters of floor space - 60 square meters for a new Paper Braille Printing room (to accommodate the new

BrailloNorway 440 SW); 80 square meters additional collating and finishing space; and a 60 square meter boardroom with its additional facilities. These additions should be sufficient to handle current and future needs for the foreseeable future (+- 5 years).

Within the next years we'll have to do a new "needs estimate", and find an alternative building if necessary.

3. SERVICE DELIVERY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Braille Transcription

Activities	Strategy for delivery	Strategy to improve service delivery
Braille transcription to: Blind individuals	As the only service provider in SA for this type of service, we must address the need for access to all kinds of information by ordinary blind people	Long waiting periods for transcribed material: Improved training of data-typists and proofreaders; Increase in staff compliment
Braille transcription to: Blind Students	As there are a limited number of only service provider in SA for this type of service, we must increase in-house production of study material to blind students; assist other providers (University Disabled Student Units) with technical knowledge and braille code application	Long waiting periods for transcribed material: Improved training of data-typists and proofreaders; Increase in staff compliment; brailling of only the relevant text needed for study, and not the whole book
Braille transcription to: Schools for the blind	We are one of only two organisations that handle textbook translation into braille and the only provider of braille textbooks in African languages	Improved training of data-typists and proofreaders; Appoint mother-tongue-speakers for each official language; Increase in staff compliment; brailling of not only the text, but graphics as well
Braille transcription to: braille magazines	Reach as many blind individuals as possible with as much free braille literature as possible	The ever-increasing literacy levels amongst blind people over the past decade, literally force us to serve this new group of avid braille readers. We estimate this need to grow by at least 20% on a year-to-year basis, and urgently need a sponsor to help us carry the cost.

Braille Paper

Activities	Strategy for delivery	Strategy to improve service delivery
Convert own continuous-feed braille paper reels	Increase floor space; purchase converting machinery; train staff	Currently all paper conversions are outsourced with up to 3 month lead times. If we can handle the function in-house:

		Lead times cut to 20 working days; Cost saving existing staff to handle conversion process; Different paper sizes can be produced as requested.
Increase braille paper stock levels	Extra work to keep staff busy during quiet periods, as paper can be cut, packed, labeled and stored for future use	Increased floor space will provide more space to allow this.
Pricing	Keep price slightly lower than other provider, Pioneer Printers, to secure maximum amount of orders	Bargain for better price from paper merchants. Contact current Pioneer customers to ascertain pricing.
Paper type and sheet size	Increase different sheet sizes and types of paper stock items according to customer needs	As more and more different braille emossers enters the SA market, we will keep in close contact with the major inports (NCT, Sensory Solutions, Boland Electronics).

4. CONCLUSION

Blind SA visited many schools and corporations as a desensitisation drive. We were also visited by many individuals, schools, corporates and senior government officials. These visits to Blind SA results in a better understanding of how the total braille production process is done.

Blind SA also entered into talks with the Dept of Education and Schools for the Blind in collaboration with the Pioneer Printers of the School for the Blind in Worcester, to find ways and means to alleviate the backlog of braille school textbooks for the new curriculum. We all share the concern that the said backlog will not be wiped out easily or fast enough due to the lack of capacity in the braille printing facilities in South Africa as well as the lack of funding to increase for example the capacity of Braille Services of Blind SA.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

1. Organogram of Blind SA

Executive Committee: Blind SA
President Blind SA: Miss Cathy Donaldson
Manager: Braille Services: Mr Philip Jordaan

Administration

Chief Financial Officer: Mr B Sam
Administrative Assistant to Governance: Mrs Sanette Jordaan
Bequest Officer: Mrs Gloria de Koker
Senior Admin Clerk: Mrs Alida van Coller
Admin Clerk: Mrs Elize Jacobs
Admin Clerk: Mrs Karin Gouws
Braille Instructor: Miss Tracy Smith
Telephonist: Ms Melody Behrendt
Driver: Mr Edward Gowane
Messenger: Mr Charles Mongale
Cleaner: Ms Theresa Mashankane
Cleaner: Ms Winnifred Mceka

Braille Services

Manager: Braille Services: Mr Philip Jordaan
Braille Technical Adviser: Miss Susan van Wyk

Datatypes

Head Datatypist: Mrs Nadia Gxasheka
Datatypist: Ms Joan Sipamla
Datatypist: Ms Patricia Mceka
Datatypist: Ms Mpho Sipamla
Datatypist: Ms Angelique Stander
Datatypist: Ms Simone Wessels
Datatypist: Ms Neetu Cherian

Proofreaders (8 teams)

Head Proofreader (braille): Mr Abel Mohajane
Proofreader (print): Ms Yolanda Morison
Proofreader (braille): Ms Susan van Wyk
Proofreader (print): Ms Victoria de Bruin
Proofreader (braille): Mr Leon Swart
Proofreader (print): Ms Margie Atterbury
Proofreader (braille): Mr Jan Strydom
Proofreader (print): Miss Maryke van Wyk
Proofreader (print): Ms Lauren Halcrow
Proofreader (braille): Mr Johannes Dube
Proofreader (print): Ms Joyce Radebe
Proofreader (braille): Mr Wellington Pike
Proofreader (print): Ms Victoria Mtshali
Proofreader (braille): Mr Simon Netshituni
Proofreader (print): Ms Merriam Nevondo

Braille Printing

Head Braille Printing: Mr Rudolph Lubbe
 Operator: Braille Printing: Mr Louis Lubbe
 Operator: Braille Printing: Mr Shimmy Radise

Machine Operators

Machine Operator: Mr Michael Khoalane
 Machine Operator: Mr John Maleka
 Machine Operator: Mr Jonas Maleka
 Machine Operator: Mr Yull de Bruin

Staff

Resignations and New Appointments

Resignations: 1 Braille Proofreader and 1 Print Proofreader
 Dismissals: 1 Machine operator (Printing Dept)
 Passed away: 1 Datatypist
 Retrenchment: 1 Director

Appointments: 1 Printing Press Assistant (to replace the machine operator) and 1 Afrikaans/English Print Proofreader (to assist the Braille instructor)

Disciplinary action was taken against 1 member of staff: Employment terminated -- for poor time-keeping - 1 Machine Operator.

Personnel costs 2006/2007

Total Expenditure R 000	Personnel Expenditure R 000	Training Expenditure R 000	Consultancy Services R 000	Pension fund Contribution	Personnel cost as a percent of total expenditure	Average personnel cost per employee (R 000)
5 476	4 64	40	nil	472	87%	106

Salaries: Overtime, Housing allowance and Medical Assistance, 2006/2007

Salaries: Amount R 000; Salaries as a % of personnel cost	Overtime: Amount R 000; Overtime as a % of personnel cost	Housing Allowance: Amount R 000; H/A as a % of personnel cost	Assistance: Amount R 000; Medical Assistance as a % of personnel cost Medical
4'003; 84%	241; 5%	116; 3%	302; 6%

Employment and Vacancies, 31 March 2006

Numbers of posts	Number of posts filled	Vacancy rate
45	43	2

Annual turnover rates by salary levels for the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007

Number of employees as on 1 April 2006	Appointments and transfers into the institution	Terminations and transfers out of the institution	Turnover rate	Number at 31/03/2007

45	1	5	14%	42
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NOTE: Percentage based on total expenditure.

Reason why staff are leaving the institution

Termination Type	Number	% Of Total
Death	1	2%
Resignation	2	4%
Expiry of contract	0	0%
Dismissal operational changes	0	0%
Dismissal Misconduct	1	2%
Dismissal Inefficiency	0	0%
Discharged due to ill-health	0	0%
Retirement	0	0%
Retrenchment	1	2%
Total number of employees who left as a % of the total employment	5	12%

Employment Equity

Total number of employees in each of the following post levels as on 31 March 2007

Post level	Male African	Male Coloured	Male Indian	Male White	Female African	Female Coloured	Female Indian	Female White	Total
Management				1					1
Middle management and high level specialist	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	5
Supervisor and high level skilled/clerical	4	0	0	3	6	3	1	11	28
Lower level skilled/clerical	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Very low skilled	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3

Labour Relations

Misconduct and disciplinary hearings finalized, 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007

Outcomes of disciplinary hearings	Number
Correctional counselling	2
Verbal warning	0
Written warning	2
Final written warning	1

Suspend without pay	1
Fine	0
Demotion	0
Dismissal	1
Not guilty	0
Case withdrawn	0
Total	7

Types of misconduct addressed at disciplinary hearings

Type of misconduct	Number
Poor time keeping	2
High Absenteeism	1
Poor work performance	1

Training proved 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007

Gender	Number of employees as at 1 April 2007	Learnerships	Skills Programmes & other short courses	Other forms of training	Total
Female	25	0	8	0	8
Male	17	0	2	3	5
Total	42	0	10	3	13