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MEMORANDUM II: BLL 1964

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THE BUREAU OF LITERACY AND LITERATURE

As at May 27th, 1964.

BLL:1964/109

THE BUREAU OF LITERACY AND LITERATURE

Definition What is the Bureau of Literacy and Literature?

The Bureau is a voluntary organisation which grew in response to the continuing demand created during a five-year experiment in literacy for Non-Europeans. The experiment, which was sponsored mainly by the Government and the Bantu Welfare Trust, ended in 1952. Since then, the small unit of three workers and latterly four, with occasional additional or expert assistance and some voluntary help, has continued to maintain and develop the work established by the experiment.

In April of 1964, the organisation thus created and which became known as the Bureau of Literacy and Literature, was fully registered, under the same name, as an association not-for-profit under Section 21 of the Companies Act.

Achievements What has the Bureau done until now?

During the years from 1947-1964, the small Bureau team, together with the expert and other help it obtained, has produced 26 books, (some in several editions), over nine languages. It has serviced an annual average of well over two hundred classes on mines, missions, farms, in industries, and in other areas. It has gained large experience in language training on the job and is at present experimenting with the latest scientific methods of language teaching. It is conservatively estimated that this small team has made 150,000 to 200,000 adults literate since 1949. Until about 1959, every 50c (5/0d) which went through the budget accounted for one new literate.

How has the Bureau financed itself until now?

Since 1956 the Bureau has been financed by the Institute of Race Relations, the Bantu Welfare Trust, and at various times by grants (sometimes for specific items), by the Council of Education, the Christian Literature Council, the Africa Committee of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in U.S.A., the Continuation Committee of the S.A. Churches. There also have been some gifts and legacies (Engelhard Industries, Charles James Lillieshall Trust, Estate late J.I. Murawitz, Estate late B. Kaunheimer, Estate late H. Colby, the Methodist Church of South Africa, the American Lutheran Mission, the Dutch Reformed Church). Recently, too, we have been helped by two loans.

Some privately financed projects, for example, for the mines, required the seconding of Bureau personnel and facilities for considerable periods. This made possible occasional contributions to overheads. The Bureau has made no general nor public appeal for funds.

Purpose What is the main purpose of the Bureau?

The main purpose is to continue to prepare material and develop methods and techniques for helping illiterate adults, mainly Bantu-speaking, to become actively literate, and to encourage the writing of literature suitable for emerging literates, new literates, and full literates.

Sponsors Who are responsible for the Bureau?

Over the last few years an ad hoc Advisory Committee has been negotiating for registration of the Bureau and will continue to care for it until the Bureau holds its inaugural meeting. At that meeting Office Bearers, Committees and Officials will be appointed in terms of the Constitution. Copies of the Constitution are attached. The names of the sponsoring signatories appear on

both documents. The inaugural meeting of the Bureau takes place on June 8th.

Needs

What are the needs which the Bureau seeks to fulfill?

So long as Bantu-speaking children in the Republic are not compelled to attend school, many will grow to adulthood illiterate, only partly literate, or unable to maintain literacy. For all these, special courses are required.

In the Republic a high percentage of Bantu-speaking people of over school-going age are complete illiterates, or lapsed literates, or semi-literates, or part-literates. For these to become literate, special materials and techniques must be provided.

Even those who have achieved a fair standard of proficiency find it difficult to make their literacy part of positive and developing living. They can be helped in this respect only if there is easily available to them plenty of reading material, desirable and satisfying.

The potential market amongst Bantu-speaking people for literature of a universal level can never be created in commercial terms, nor can writing by Bantu-speaking authors be developed fully, unless these needs are met.

Equipment

Is this Bureau equipped to meet the demands which these needs imply?

The Bureau continues as the unit which has been functioning since 1947. It has, therefore, acquired a basic and experienced staff, using tested materials, methods and techniques, and operating in a practical field. To make the Bureau effective, the following are required:

An expanded staff;
New style materials;
Extended field-work and training of teachers;
Follow-on literature.

Languages

What Languages does the Bureau cover?

Literacy work has been established in seven "vernaculars" of the Republic - Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Pedi, Tswana, Tsonga, and Venda, and in Afrikaans and English.

Field of Operations

Does the Bureau operate outside the Republic?

Though registration is for work within the Republic, the Bureau's activities can be extended by arrangement with relevant Government departments to other territories. Already there are tentative plans to help in Bechuanaland with Tswana literacy and to assist in the initiation of schemes for English Language and Literacy in both Bechuanaland and Swaziland.

Distribution of Material

How does the Bureau handle distribution of books?

Since most of the books at present in use were first produced during the experimental years, these have been distributed by the Bureau itself. A revolving printing and publishing fund (now exhausted, except for some books) made it possible to distribute to organisers of literacy classes at the subsidised price of about 30c each. Now, the aim is that new books be published and distributed commercially. They can then be bought by individuals as well as by organisations or sponsors of classes. This in itself is desirable.

Classes

Does the Bureau conduct classes itself?

The Bureau trains teachers for "classes" and pays regular "refresher" visits. This seems the most economic use of its

skills. The Bureau does not conduct classes itself except when testing materials.

**Servicing
of Classes**

How does the Bureau handle field work?

A sponsor or organisation asks for the services of Bureau trainers on the homeground of the proposed literacy project. One or two trainers spend four or five days on the project site. During this time they introduce materials and methods to those selected (by the class organisers) to teach. By the end of the fourth day, the newly trained teachers are already working with learners. Trainers pay return visits on request, and most projects ask for a yearly visit.

The sponsors are always advised to obtain the required permission to run classes. Some classes are run by permit and some qualify as part of some other activity, for example, Preparatory Classes for Confirmation. In the case of a large industrial group, bloc registration is usually the most convenient way. The onus to obtain permits, or registration, or recognition, is on the sponsor or organiser.

**Basis of
Servicing**

Does the Bureau charge for training services?

The sponsor of the project usually refunds return fares for trainers and provides food and quarters for them. In the case of industries a sub-economic fee is usually paid. The matter of fees for training services will be reviewed.

Other Work

What other work does the Bureau do?

It develops language courses in both Afrikaans and English. This is necessary for those adults who are already literate in a vernacular but who wish to learn Afrikaans and/or English.

It prepares and encourages the preparation of follow-on literature for new literates.

It helps authors to prepare manuscripts for publication.

Recent Projects

Are there any special fields of recent activities?

Swaziland has been the scene of a very interesting development. Between October of 1961 and the end of 1963, the Bureau helped a voluntary, non-political body, the Swaziland Sebenta Society, to prepare a primer-series of four books and to pilot the use of these. As a result, a three-year campaign has been financed and launched. (A Memorandum and a set of books to illustrate these points are available).

**Cost of
Materials**

How much does it cost to get a similar series into the field in each language?

It costs on an average about R.2,000 to see a series of four books (titles) in any one language into commercial distribution. This figure makes it possible to have such books retailing around 35c. Without some such subsidy it is impossible to get editions of much under 7,000 per book into circulation much under the price of 70c to 75c per copy: that is counting all costs, including pictures.

**Priority
Demand**

What are the immediate demands upon the Bureau?

Apart from those connected with office work and organisation and those for services of Trainers, for which there is a long waiting list, the demands are as follows:

- A four-book series in Pedi for the Northern Transvaal;
- A four-book series in Tswana for use in the Republic and Bechuanaland;
- A four-book series for Zulu-speaking people;
- A four-book series in Xhosa for existing classes which require books, and to meet the expected demand from Transkei;
- Three language courses in Afrikaans and three in English for those wishing to graduate from literacy in their home language to being able to communicate in an official language, and
- Three or four literacy courses in both Afrikaans and English.

These are priorities but requests for books in Sotho, Tsonga, Venda, have been received and it is expected that South West Africa will need attention.

Why new-type Primers?

Why is it necessary to produce all these new primers?

The early primers are now completely out of date. Moreover, they were not intended for more than experimental use and so were not such as could be marketed commercially. In the face of a rapid expanding demand it is unrealistic to attempt to hobble along with the old-style books which cannot be handled except through channels of limited distribution. With new-style books and at least three more field workers the Bureau can easily double its annual "crop" of new literates.

What is the Bureau doing to meet the priority demand for books?

Pedi: Book I is ready for the press. Book II is ready for illustration. Books III and IV are projected for late 1964.

Tswana: Book I is drafted and ready for illustration, and Book II is projected for 1964, and Books III and IV are projected for 1965.

Zulu: Books I and II are drafted and ready for illustration. Book III is projected for late 1964, and Book IV for 1965.

Xhosa: Book I is being drafted. Books II and III and IV are projected for 1965.

Language Courses in the official languages: English Books I and II are being drafted. Afrikaans will be drafted in three books in 1965.

Literacy Courses: in the official languages: English will be drafted in four books. Afrikaans Book I may be drafted in 1964 and Books II and III in 1965.

In regard to demands for training services, the Bureau's field workers are ready to induct two or three new colleagues if the latter can be financed. In a matter of one month, new staff can be in the field.

Methods of publishing and distributing

How does the Bureau propose to get the new-style primers published and distributed?

For realistic distribution the aim is to get all books handled commercially. Since there are so many Bantu languages to be "catered for", most editions must be small, at least initially. This means that the economic price of each, even inferiorly produced, would be in the region of 70c - 75c per copy. This is a price beyond the means of those wanting them. It is therefore necessary to subsidise production at a point before publication. To bring the selling price of literacy books to 35c but not more than 40c per copy, each of the sixteen courses in the "vernaculars" will have to be subsidised, on an average, to the extent of R500. Since 5

Since Afrikaans and English Courses can be produced in larger editions, the figure might be R300 for each of the fourteen titles contemplated. Follow-on books: at least one in each language might require R200 subsidy per title.

The table which follows gives details of requirements for subsidies:

<u>Language</u>	<u>Books</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>
Pedi	Literacy I, II, III, IV Follow-on One	R2,000	R 200
Tswana	Literacy I, II Literacy III and IV Follow-on One	1,000	1,000 200
Zulu	Literacy I, Literacy II, III and IV Follow-on One	500	1,500 200
Xhosa	Literacy I, Literacy II, III, and IV Follow-on One	500	1,500 200
Afrikaans	Language I Literacy I		300 300
Afrikaans	Language II and III Literacy II and III		600 600
English	Language I Literacy I Language II and III Literacy II and III	300 300	600 600
Sotho	I, II, III, IV		2,000
Tsonga	I, II, III, IV		2,000
Venda	I, II, III, IV		2,000
S.W.A.	I, II, III, IV		2,000
		<u>R4,600</u>	<u>R15,800</u>

Later Demands What about later demands for which may not be priority listed above?

Further editions of all books can be reprinted and distributed commercially at the same retail price per copy and without subsidy, because production costs will not have to include type-setting or plate-making.

Office and Field What expenditure must be met in respect of demands for office and field services within the next five years?
Activities

Provision must be made for the general running of the Bureau, for it is the dynamo. In the Bureau itself the preparation of materials involves many activities creative and technical, devising and testing of methods and techniques, organisation of field services, editing, endless administrative routines, and patient hours with authors on their manuscripts. Without this basic dynamic of the Bureau there can be no literacy work.

The minimum annual costs over the next five years are estimated as follows:-

Salaries - staff	R14,000
2 European)	
5 Non-European)	
1 Part-time Worker)	
Rent and Electricity.....	800
(R65 per month)	
Additional Equipment.....	400
(tapes, duplicators, recorders, typewriters, etc.)	
Paper, stencils, stationery.....	200
Travelling and Subsistence.....	2,500
(field work, including vehicle)	
Postage and Telephone.....	200
General Office Expenses.....	100
Keeping old type books in supply	Nil
(These work on a virtually exhausted revolving fund and with rising costs, replacements by duplicating dwindle).	
	<u>R18,200</u>

Since 1959 with rising costs, the cost of producing a new literate through the Bureau's efforts has risen so it is estimated that every new literate will now cost the Bureau between 75c and R1. This allows for the above expenditures and provides facilities to produce close on 20,000 new literates a year.

Immediate Needs

What is the order of priorities and what are the total amounts involved for 1964?

1. Running of the Bureau	R18,200
2. Book subsidies	4,600
	<u>R22,800</u>

Present Resources

What are the present resources of the Bureau?

For the period starting October 1st, 1963, the Bureau is financed as follows:

- (a) A grant towards the salaries of two African Field Workers to March, 1964.
- (b) Temporary administration of the Institute of Bantu Languages, (sponsored).
- (c) A grant of R200 from the Christian Literature Council.
- (d) A grant from the Africa Committee of the National Council of Churches of Christ in U.S.A., to enable us to help, mainly in Swaziland and Bechuanaland, with the piloting of literacy classes in Swati, Tswana, and English (not yet received).
- (e) Refund 7

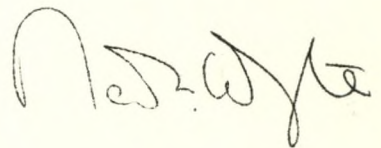
- (e) Refund for services of two full-time and one half-time staff seconded to a privately sponsored language project. (The Bureau will have to replace these members of staff immediately if it is to carry out the programme for 1964).
- (f) About R1,200 worth of books, which will all sell during the next six months, and R400 worth of equipment. (The value of the books represent all that is left of a revolving fund of about R5,400 which was set up in 1952. Printing costs have so climbed since 1952 that every new edition reduced the fund. In addition, sudden changes of orthography left three titles involving a loss of R900 on the shelves. Such books as may still be required will, however, be kept in supply by duplicating until the new-type primers are ready. But duplicating costs go up, so supplies dwindle).

Special
Announcements

- A. The Africa Committee of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in U.S.A. is sponsoring a visit from September 19th to mid-November of Miss Marion Halvorson, an experienced Literacy worker, to help us.
- B. The United States - South Africa Leadership Exchange Program INC., has informed us that the Bureau is included in one of its "Wingspread" projects. Because of this the Bureau hopes to be visited by an expert in the field of Applied Linguistics, perhaps in 1965.

(These two visits will be of great importance, as from both we hope to get evaluation of what we are doing, guidance in developing materials and methods by new approaches, and new techniques in the application of these in our field work).

- C. Professor Cole and his colleagues, Professor Lanham and his colleagues, and Mr. Ken Hartshorne, Mr. C. Phatudi, and Professor Nyembezi are amongst those who are frequently called upon to help and advise. These and several others, many very old friends of the Bureau, constitute what has, in effect, become a "board of consultants" for technical matters.



M.E. Whyte

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