COUNTRY REPORT SOUTH AFRICA

THE SOUTH AFRICAN BRAILLE AUTHORITY (SABA)

115-801NPO

2016-2018

FOR

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ENGLISH BRAILLE (ICEB)

# INTRODUCTION

This report will serve before the 2018 ICEB’s mid-term Executive meeting to be held in Dublin, Ireland. SABA wishes to appreciate the Child Vision for hosting this meeting in Ireland.

SABA is currently an active role player at ICEB and its committees. We are grateful that we represent Africa, especially the Sub-Saharan Africa, in a way that benefits, and influences, other countries who are still contemplating to join ICEB. We extend our expertise to the neighbouring countries who, at their own space and pursuance, ask SABA to guide them in braille-related matters. SABA remains committed to the development of braille in Sub-Saharan African countries.

## COMPOSITION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

In 2016, SABA General Assembly hosted by Pioneer Printers elected the following individuals to serve at the Executive Committee:

* Mr Ntshavheni Netshituni (President)
* Mr Christo de Klerk (vice president)
* Mr Derick Greeff (Treasurer)
* Mr Deena Moodley (member)
* Mr Modiri Matshwane (member)
* Mr Onthusitse Gama (member) and
* Mrs. Reinette Popplestone (member)
* Pioneer Printers is serving on the board as secretariat. This is a non-voting position and is appointed by the executive.

# STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

* DAC: In spite of the very difficult circumstances, SABA still holds in high esteem the Department of Arts and Culture for their unwavering support of braille in the country.
* SABA has entered into a partnership with one of its members, Blind SA, to conduct training wherever it is required. This is the sole major fund-generation programme, which had sustained SABA to this end.
* DBE’S LTSM Task Team: The Authority has joined the Department of Basic Education (DBE) as an expert in braille matters. This team discusses the Learner Teacher Support Materials (LTSM) and gives necessary expert advice to the department.
* Section27: SABA still continues to give support to Section27, an independent legal body that fights to protect the rights of learners who are being ignored by the DBE.
* Department of Social Development: This relationship had strained because the Department seems not willing to engage with the Authority. We will endeavor to put pressure on the Department so that they play a meaningful role in braille.
* SANCB and Blind SA: The Authority had collaborated with the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB) and Blind SA to roll out the 2017 edition of the Braille Cup. This had been a success compared to the 2015 edition, especially when it comes to participation and the spread of winners around schools that attended.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATING PROJECT AND OTHER RELATED ACTIVITIES

* SABA applied for funds at the Department of Arts and Culture to fund the Monitoring and Evaluating of the implementation of the UBC. This is a project, which would have run through all universities, schools and braille production houses. This application was unfortunately turned down and other means are still being looked at.
* African Language Fund application: As a result of a decision taken in 2016 to make available reading material in African languages, an application for funds had been submitted to the Pan South African Languages Board (PanSALB) in November 2017. We hope to secure funds so that books in African languages can be made available to young readers.
* Read Aloud Day: Blind SA, collaborating with Nali-Bali, a programme that assists children to read, hosted a Read Aloud event on the 1st of February 2018. We hope to partner with Blind SA in future in order to put more expertise to the event.

# PARTICIPATION AT ICEB

* ICEB COMMITTEES: SABA prides itself by having representatives at all ICEB’s committees. This ensures entrenched guidance when it comes to decisions that are taken at these committees.
* Executive meetings: Mr N Netshituni, SABA president, participates at all executive meetings which are held via skype. He also attends physical executive meetings, one of which is held in Ireland, Dublin, in 2018.
* SURVEYS: SABA had also participated on surveys conducted by ICEB. This relates to the survey on the sign to be used for apostrophe, music enquiries, application of UEB rules etc.
* Presentation of papers: Mrs Pasha Alden, one of the delegates in 2016, presented a paper that demonstrated the inaccessibility of technology braille to other African countries titled: “Provision of braille reading and learning material in South Africa: A balance between technology and Braille Adding Value and Creating a Love of Reading”. SABA prides itself for embracing individuals with such immense knowledge and expertise.

# CURRENT ACTIVITIES

The main focus for this year is to proceed with all other outstanding matters identified in 2016 and revisited in 2017. Furthermore, 2018 is an election year for SABA. New members will thus be elected during the General Assembly in May. After this assembly, the newly elected executive will meet and draw up a programme of action for the term ahead.

* Tatrapoint: The Authority supports any initiative by any of its members to land devices into the hands of our blind constituency at a cheaper price. Blind SA, collaborating with Edit Micro, is distributing a cheaper version of a brailler (the Tatrapoint), which is selling for around R8,000.
* The Braille Me: An Indian company had partnered with Blind SA in the distribution of a cheaper version of a 20-cell braille display known as the Braille Me. Two individuals, Mr Christo de Klerk (vice president SABA) and Mr Deena Moodley (a member of executive of SABA) were identified to provide expert advice on the prototype of the machine. We hope this device will be launched sometime during the second half of 2018.

# IMPORTANT DECISIONS TAKEN

* The Afrikaans Rules Team decided on the use of Afrikaans Diacretic, and resolved that in Afrikaans the UEB signs are used to indicate diacritic marks on letters instead of the current abbreviated usage. This decision will be ratified at the 2018 General Assembly and will be applied henceforth.
* Emanating from the 2017 General Assembly, SABA developed a DBT template with a view to standardize translations for braille production in the South African context. It was felt, *inter alia, that the headings should be built in a certain manner, which will be more understandable for users and readers.*
* Certification of braille producers: SABA also decided to certify its members who produce braille. This will help them in ensuring that they comply with UBC without much gnagging. This will also ensure that government departments who want to employ their services refer to the list of certified braille producers from which list they can select.

# CONCLUSION

SABA will continue to give support and guidance to ICEB. Braille is a medium of reading and writing for those who prefer it and, as SABA, we must ensure that proper use of braille is enforced. We will continue to lobby support and mobilise funds from government to ensure that SABA sustains beyond the training as a fund-generation activity. Finally, I wish the 2018 Mid-term Executive meeting success.

Ntshavheni Netshituni

President (SABA) On behalf of the executive committee