



No. 9

December 2002

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The 2002 issue of the Newsletter begins with a tribute to Professor Chimere Ikoku, a great friend of the Children's Centre. It next takes up several outstanding events of the past year, including a workshop introducing the Psycho-educational Testing Centre and a youth forum on prostitution. It has also been an eventful time for the library, which has continued its outreach to the prison and participated in the Nigerian International Book Fair in May, 2002. A number of African children's books acquired at the fair are reviewed for our readers. We hope you enjoy the Newsletter.

**Tribute to Professor Chimere Ikoku**

It was with a great sense of shock and sadness that we learned of the untimely death of our former Vice-Chancellor, Professor Chimere Ikoku, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October, 2002. The University Women's Association has a special affection for Professor Ikoku because of the cordial relationship we shared and his many contributions to the work of the Association, both in his capacity as Vice-Chancellor and as the husband of our amiable and highly committed Patron, Mrs. Edem Ikoku.

Professor and Mrs. Ikoku arrived on campus when the Children's Centre project of UWA was still housed in small temporary quarters, while its permanent facility, the Madam Hulder Iwuanyanwu Building, was nearing completion. Professor Ikoku took immediate interest in the project and gave it a prominent place in the University's Silver Jubilee celebrations in October, 1986. He received the building, donated by Chief Dr. Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu as part of the Alumni's contribution to the Endowment Fund, and hosted a command dramatic performance given by the children for the Alumni and Convocation guests.

In 1988 Professor Ikoku put UWA's project on a firmer footing by approving a formal relationship between the Children's Centre Library and the Department of Library Science. This relationship has worked to their great mutual benefit, as the library provides a teaching laboratory for the department while department staff and students

maintain the library. At the same time, he approved the posting of two staff to the Centre to ensure regular opening hours.

This support continued throughout his tenure as Vice-Chancellor. Whenever UWA had to call on the University for assistance, she always received ready help from Professor Ikoku. In addition to the official assistance and financial help, we enjoyed the personal touch given by Professor Ikoku. He attended our functions, both the big official ones and the little informal ones put on by the children, and opened the Vice-Chancellor's Lodge to us, during Christmas carolling, cookery classes conducted by his wife and other occasions.

Professor Ikoku was a great friend of UWA and the Children's Centre. His contributions will take their place in the history of the Children's Centre Project of UWA and his fatherly role will always be remembered. May the soul of our friend, Professor Chimere Ikoku, rest in perfect peace. Amen.

*Mrs. Nwanneka Nwala & Mrs. Virginia Dike*

### **Workshop introducing Psycho-Educational Testing Services**

The workshop was held from July 2-4, 2002 in the Children's Centre Psycho-Educational Testing and Library room. Its goal was to launch the Psycho-Educational Testing facility as part of the comprehensive child development services of the Children's Centre. The facility is a community service and a teaching laboratory for special education and relevant programmes of the Faculty of Education, in a linkage approved by the Dean, Faculty of Education and the Head, Department of Educational Foundations. The workshop was open to all members of the Children's Centre Committee and executive members of UWA. It received support and enthusiasm from all as a way forward in promoting the Centre's services.

The workshop had several specific aims. One was to familiarize and sensitize participants with information on special children, their potentials and the resources available in the facility for assisting such children. It also aimed to give participants basic knowledge in identification and intervention as well as programme development for several categories of special needs persons, including the gifted, learning disabled, developmentally disabled, and emotionally disturbed. The workshop provided hands-on training in skills needed to work with special pupils and built confidence of participants in their ability to work with special pupils. It aimed to provide basic information which could be shared with parents and teachers for preventive practices or referrals to the Centre for help. It was seen as the first in a series of training programmes to be organized in the next few years with a view to increasing the pool of adequately trained personnel in the area.

The two resource persons for the workshop were members of the Children's Centre Committee as well as educators in the Department of Educational Foundations. Dr.(Mrs.) Wilhelmina J. Kalu, who developed the workshop and brought her extensive resources and experience in the area, has background in early childhood education, special education, clinical social work and social administration, and educational psychology, with emphasis on school examination anxieties, gifted and learning disabled. Dr. Victoria Onu has experience in early childhood, youth and special education with emphasis on gifted and talented children's curriculum and programme development. She is a Christian school educator with experience in development of programmes for school drop-outs.

The workshop content covered three areas. The first topic was normal child development and developmental disabilities, with special reference to genetic and environmental factors affecting people of African origin both positively and negatively,

and problems in mental retardation, slow learning and school discipline. Next, the workshop considered learning disabilities, looking at the environmental, genetic and socio-cultural contributory factors, the problems of mis-diagnosis, behavioural mishandling and school stereotypes, and assessment and intervention strategies for reading difficulties. Thirdly, the workshop looked at the peculiar problems of gifted and talented children, their behavioural characteristics, interventive and supportive skills, and wholistic assessment of multiple intelligences as a way out of the narrow confines of cognitive and academic intelligence.

Participants were enthusiastic and excited about the workshop. They participated actively and wanted the workshop duration to be extended. Evaluation showed that they had learned new concepts and they requested for follow-up activities. It is therefore recommended that the workshop should be continued on an annual basis. Resource persons from other areas in special needs education, such as measurement, sensory, speech and communication disorders should be involved.

*Dr. Wilhelmina Kalu, Workshop leader*

### **Youth Forum on Prostitution**

As part of our programme in redirecting the values in our society, the University Women's Association (UWA), in partnership with AIESEC, an international students group, organized a Youth Forum on June 5, 2002 at the Princess Alexandra Auditorium of the University of Nigeria. The theme for discussion was "Prostitution: Causes, Consequences and Solutions." The panelists for the forum were eminent speakers who brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the discussion. They included: Dr. F. Ebozue, Director of Medical Services; Dr.(Mrs.) Ogo Amucheazi, Deputy University Librarian; Prof. I. E. Eyo of the Department of Psychology; Dr. E. E. Uwakwe of the Department of Sociology/Anthropology; and Rev.Fr. T. Enoyima of St. Peter's Chaplaincy. The Forum was an eye-opening event for discussants, adults and youth alike as it afforded valuable opportunities for interaction. Several speakers emphasized the importance of self-esteem and self-respect as protection against prostitution and the need to address the socio-economic factors behind this evil if it is to be overcome.

The Youth Forum is intended to bring together parents, teachers, students and youth to deal with a series of moral and social vices common in the society. At the end of the programme the audience and speakers expressed satisfaction with the event and expressed the desire to be informed and involved in any such forum in the future.

We want to use this opportunity to thank those who made the Youth Forum a huge success. We immensely thank the our patron Dr.(Mrs.) Nkechi Mbanefoh; the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Ginigeme Mbanefoh; the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Prof. Chukwu; Mrs. Innoma; the Manager, Coca-Cola at Nsukka; Mrs. Charity Okide and members of the UWA Executive for their financial support. We also thank the members of AIESEC for all the time, thought, and effort they put into making the Forum a success.

*Mrs. Nwanneka Nwala, President of UWA*

### **Prison Library Outreach of the Children's Centre Library**

The prison library outreach made significant progress in its third year of operation. In the past year the new Chief Superintendent of Prisons, Mr. Theophilus Ndukwu, allocated a small one-room building for the library. Before this time, the library had borrowed space in the prison chapel and a staff office. The room was renovated and equipped through anonymous donations from Children's Centre Committee members. The new CSP also solved the problem of personnel by assigning a newly-posted young warder, Mr. Eziyi, to the library full-time. Before then, the library had been run on an ad

hoc basis by two National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members assigned to the Children's Centre and by two final year students of the Department of Library and Information Science. The new arrangement makes for a regular, continuous and growing service.

The collection is made up of the prison's original stock of textbooks in some primary and secondary school subjects, subsequent donations by members of the Children's Centre Committee and other members of the University community, and a revolving loan of fiction, nonfiction and magazines from the Children's Centre Library. The collection has been augmented by books and magazines donated by Ms. Terri Emezi, Prof. Julie Okpala, Mrs. Kathy Elekwa, Mrs. Grace Anyanwu, Mrs. Nneka Onwubiko, Mrs. Chinwe Ezeani, Prof. Judith Osuala, Dr. Willi Kalu, Mrs. Virginia Dike, , and Rev. and Mrs. Torty Onoh.

The inmates have enthusiastically embraced the service, which relieves boredom, engages their minds, enriches their outlook, and affords opportunities for self-improvement. Analysis of circulation statistics over a two year period reveals a wide range of reading interests. Magazines are especially popular, including newsmagazines (*Time*, *Newswatch*, *Tell*), general knowledge magazines such as *National Geographic*, and devotional literature (*The Word Among Us*, *Every Day with Jesus*, *Decision*). Colourfully illustrated and simply written information books are another popular choice for recreational reading. Novels are popular with the more able readers. Textbooks are very much in demand, as many prisoners wish to further their education.

The prison library project has been reported in a paper presented by Mrs. Virginia Dike at the Second Pan African Reading for All Conference held in Abuja in October, 2001 and in an article, also by Mrs. Dike, in the *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science in Africa*.

The need for this service is great and the response of the inmates is very encouraging. We, therefore, appeal to our readers to join in contributing to this worthwhile effort.

### **Nigerian International Book Fair held in Abuja, May 14-18, 2002**

The Children's Centre Library participated in the Nigerian International Book Fair as a stakeholder, through the good offices of our former UWA President and Children's Centre Committee Chairman, Prof. Ebele Maduewesi, now the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). The Chair of the Children's Centre Library Committee, Mrs. Virginia Dike served on the planning committee and as resource person for a children's writing workshop during the fair. Through this participation the CCL was able to acquire a large number of African children's books from Ghana, South Africa, Kenya and other countries.

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

Here are a sample of African children's books acquired at the Nigerian International Book Fair, reviewed by Mrs. Ifeoma Echezona, Mrs. Nneka Onwubiko, Mrs. Chinwe Ezeani, and Mrs. Ngozi Osadebe.

### **Picture Books**

*Fly, Eagle, Fly!* is a Ghanaian fable attributed to James Kwegyir Aggrey, retold here by Christopher Gregorowski and illustrated by Niki Daly (Ibadan: Spectrum, 2002). The story teaches us to take ourselves seriously and to have high aspirations, instead of thinking we are chickens destined to spend our lives limited to an earthly existence with

limited horizons. The book's simple and readable text, beautiful color illustrations, and moral lesson make it good for middle and senior primary school pupils.

***Amazing Grace***, by Mary Hoffman and illustrated by Caroline Binch (London: Frances Lincoln, 1991), powerfully projects the image of a girl who, with the support of her mother and grandmother, battles against gender and racial stereotypes to discover she can do anything she wants to. The book's interesting story line, vigorous colour illustrations and moral lesson make it good for primary school pupils.

***Jamela's Dress***, with story and pictures by Niki Daly (Accra, Ghana: Sub-Saharan, 1999) tells the story of a small South African girl who is full of pranks. She ruins her mother's party material, but a award-winning photograph of Jamela draped in the material saves the day. The story is enjoyable and the full colour illustrations are very good. Many children will identify with Jamela and her pranks.

***Meliga's Day*** by Ghana's well-known children's writer, Meshack Asare (Accra, Ghana: Sub-Saharan, 1999) portrays the culture of northern Ghana and Burkina Faso. Meliga rushes home from school for his herding duties, only to find his favourite heifer missing. His diligence recovers his pet and the day ends happily. The book is good for senior primary school pupils. However, there are many words that need to be explained, especially against the background of the unfamiliar herding culture.

*Reviewed by Mrs. Ifeoma R. Echezona*

***Cat in Search of a Friend***, by Meshack Asare (Accra, Ghana: Subsaharan, 2000), centers around a lonely cat in search of someone who can befriend and protect her. From monkeys, chimpanzees and other animals to man, she comes to the wonderful discovery that she is indeed strong and capable of not only protecting herself but accepting her loneliness. In twenty-eight pages with lovely and exciting pictures, Meshack Asare has written a story that will entice the imagination of children and teach them to have confidence in themselves.

***Children of the Tree***, another book by Meshack Asare (Sub-Saharan (2000), is also well illustrated, but children may find it a bit more labourious because of its complex theme on the origin of human life and culture in Namibia. Despite the difficulties in weaving together the story, there is a strong effort to blend people with nature. However, there is an excess of nudity, too suggestive for the enquiring mind of the child.

***The Lost Shell***, written by Assamala Amoi and illustrated by Benjamin Kouadio Kouakou (Ghana: African Christian Press and New Africa Books, 1999), is a story from the Ivory Coast about a careless tortoise called Tutu who had to rediscover the value of her shell after losing and recovering it. The book is not only colourful, with hilarious pictures of trees, animals, birds and landscape, but is so aesthetically designed as to cause any child between the ages of five and ten to go for it on the bookshelf.

***Nana and the Caterpillar*** is a story from Mali written by Ousmane Diarra and illustrated by Virginie Desmoulins (Ghana: Africa Christian Press and New Africa Books, 1999). The theme of this attractive book is that teasing and making fun of others can cause us trouble. Nana is a teaser who is swallowed by a caterpillar she mocked. Her brave little brother, Samba, rescues her by cutting open the caterpillar, which then turns into a

beautiful butterfly. The children are taught that they too can change into someone better.

*Reviewed by Mrs. G. Nneka Onwubiko*

***The King of the Frogs*** is a West African folktale retold by Agbo and Margaret Folarin (Ibadan: Spectrum, 2001). The frogs were not satisfied with the good and kind king God gave them and demand a stronger king. God gave them the crocodile to their sorrow, teaching them the folly of ingratitude. The story is presented in two frames, one bolder and in simpler language, and the other more complex. The story is simple and clear and colourful pictures help retain the attention of the audience.

*Reviewed by Mrs. Ngozi Osadebe*

### **Child Rights Series**

Books in this series deal with issues of discrimination, child rights, and gender equality. The books were developed by the Ghana Education Service and the World University Service of Canada to help children develop positive life skills and were published by Sedco of Accra, Ghana in 2002.

***Hamidu's Dream*** by Dina Esi Mantey is about a widow Hahila who has worked so hard to put her son through school by selling vegetables in the market. She dreams of her son becoming an accountant, but that dream is scuttled by Hamidu's decision to become a chef in a big hotel. Hahila is disappointed and feels she has wasted her money on a son who wants to take up a mere female profession. Nonetheless, when Hahila honours the invitation to a cooking competition organized in Hamidu's school, she realizes the boy's talent and allows him to live out his dream.

***It's Not Fair***, by Emerald Eportufe and Mercy Kwafoa, deals mainly with sex-role stereotyping and role definition in homes. Mr. and Mrs. Bansah leave their only daughter Barikusu to grapple with all the chores at home, while her two brothers are sent to a better school and allowed to study and play. Her complaints fall on deaf ears until in a beautifully written essay she is able to depict vividly to her class teacher what every day looks like at home. The teacher eventually visits the Bensahs and is able to talk them into sharing the house chores among the three children. Barikusu, a bright pupil, then is given the opportunity to actualize her dreams of becoming a pilot.

***Dora Is Growing Up*** by Felicia Boakye Yiadom revolves around an pre-adolescent girl who is maturing faster than her mates. Suddenly her breasts are beginning to bulge and her menses start. As if that were not enough, Franko, a boy who lives with her teacher makes a pass at her. All these take their toll on poor Dora, but she is able to resist Franko and keep her eyes on further education.

***The Love Letter*** by Jacob Ansong-Ntiri relates the story of Idiato and Yao, a girl and a boy whose close friendship elicits jealousy on the part of other pupils, who believe friendships must be confined to the same sex. Two pupils play a prank on Idiato by sending her a love letter with Yao's name on it. She, however, is not deceived and reports to her teacher, who supports their friendship and insists the boys write an apology. This story deals mainly with the ability for pupils to be allowed to choose their friends, whether male or female, and the need for children to stand up for their rights.

***A Curse on the Family*** by Frank Kofi Menka is a very pathetic story of Mr. Yaro, a railway artisan who has a poor but happy family of a wife and three children. When he falls sick and the illness lingers, he visits a hospital for tests and is diagnosed as HIV

positive. The reader is made to go through the psychological trauma of the Yaros. Eventually Mr. Yaro dies and the family is abandoned. Nobody wants to come close for fear of getting infected. The Yaros are ostracized because of the curse people believe has been placed on their family. Mrs. Yaro, a petty trader, loses all her customers and the children are discriminated against in school. Even the school teacher who should have known better is not exempt. Eventually a nurse organizes a health talk to create awareness on the method of transmission of the virus. This brought many positive changes in the lives of the Yaros. *Reviewed by Mrs. Chinwe N. Ezeani*

### **HIV/AIDS Awareness Series**

The Longman Health Education Readers have 10 titles in this series relating the stories of children in Nigeria who are affected by HIV and AIDS. They were published in 2001 by Longman Nigeria in association with Longman Zambia.

*More Problems for Haruna*, by Beauty Ng'uni and Wale Okediran, tells the story of how Haruna, a poor secondary schoolboy in JS 2, was lured into homosexual activity by the much older and rich Mohammed. Haruna knew that what he was doing was wrong, but his enhanced lifestyle blinded him against all rightful thinking. The affair culminated in both of them being HIV positive. The novel both tells of how AIDS can be contracted and encourages a positive attitude towards living with AIDS.

*Take Care!*, written by Sylvester Zimba and Wale Okediran, tells the story of five young people who contracted AIDS in different ways—through sharing razor blade, prostitution, circumcision equipment, sharing needles, and blood contact with accident victims. The novel informs its audience of ways of contracting AIDS and of the services open to those affected.

*A Shadow in the Night*, by John Shiyanda and Wale Okediran, is the story of a young secondary schoolboy, Agbo, who was sick and admitted into the hospital, where he was diagnosed with HIV. He narrates to his inquisitive friend Adey, how he contracted HIV and begs him to help spread information about AIDS to other youngsters.

*Catherine's Dilemma*, by Sylvester Zimba and Wale Okediran, is the story of 18 year old Catherine, a girl with good parental upbringing whose brother invites her to Lagos for a temporary job while her school is closed. At the office the Managing Director wooed her into a sexual relationship from which she contracted AIDS. She became an active AIDS campaigner and later died of the disease.

*The Insect*, by Adelaide Phiri and Wale Okediran, is the opposite situation of the above book. Unlike Catherine's parents, Laide's mother is her bane. She pushed her daughter into a sexual relationship with a fishmonger who infected her with AIDS. The book highlights the role of mothers in the prevention/spread of HIV/AIDS.

### **Heinemann Junior African Writers Series (JAWS)**

This large series has many exciting and interesting stories set in Africa and written by African authors. The stories in the series are graded into five levels of language difficulty and have word lists and comprehension questions. Four of the many titles are annotated below.

*The Missing Calabash* by Olajire Olanlokun centers on greed and revenge. Chief Koya is bent on revenge because the king declined to make his friend Adio, from whom he had received a bribe, a titled chief. Chief Koya therefore steals the royal calabash. But little did he know that the calabash has special powers of its own. The calabash was later found and Chief Koya banished from the village. The book is level 3 and is set in the Yoruba area of Nigeria.

*Mr. Kalogo's Factory*, a level 2 book by Paulinos Vincent Magombe, introduces environmental issues in an East African setting. Mr. Kalogo from the Department of Rural Development proposes building a paper factory in a village on the Nile. The village chief refuses because he knows that it will pollute their drinking water and kill their fish, as has already happened in a neighbouring village. When Mr. Kalogo tries to do it by force, the villagers organize a protest and chase him out of their village.

*Escape from Danger* by Elisabeth Anderson is a level 3 book set in South Africa. Mr. Seabi betrayed the trust of Mr. Masemola by planning to kidnap his grandson Mabule in a bid to extort money. As luck would have it, Mabule escaped and, with the help of his friend Lebo, Mr. Seabi was trapped and caught.

*King Forever* by Cyprian Ekwensi is a level 4 book set in the imaginary African country of Bamanga. A rough soldier Sinanda seizes power from the king in a coup d'état and becomes more and more cruel, far worse than the person he deposed. At the end he himself was assassinated and another person, an army officer and trusted friend, took over the throne. It is typical of what obtains in African politics—tyrants, blood baths, and rulers who want to rule forever. *Reviewed by Mrs. Ngozi Osadebe*

## DONATIONS

### **Donation by Professor Miriam Ikejiani-Clark**

The Children's Centre is very grateful for the donation of twenty-five thousand naira (N25,000.00) by Professor Miriam Ikejiani-Clark. The donation is being used to develop the book collection and build additional furniture for the library. Many thanks to Professor Ikejiani-Clark for this kind gesture.

### **Book Donations**

The Library has continued to receive substantial donations of books and magazines from friends at home and abroad. Major donors include: the Indianapolis Public Library and Traverse Area District Library, two public libraries in the United States; the Library of Congress, also in the United States; the former British Council Library in Enugu; Mrs. Kathy Elekwa; Mrs. Terri Emezi; Mrs. Virginia Dike; Miss Ejim Dike; and Mrs. Ada Udechukwu. The Centre also received a gift of ten pounds sterling from Dr. Lesley Onuora, a former committee member now resident in the United Kingdom. We are very grateful for all this assistance to our work.