

## **Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services**

### **Wil Schrijvershof Scholarship fund for Deaf Girls in Cameroon 2020**

#### **Background**

##### **The Educational Situation of Deaf Children in Cameroon**

In Cameroon, there is an estimated 1,518,750 (40.5% of 3,750,000 people with disabilities) children with disabilities under 15 years. Mactaggart et al (2014) reported prevalence of Physical impairments (2.6%), hearing impairments (1.1%), and vision (0.4). Evidence from SEEPD Program data on enrolment of children with disabilities in school suggest that less than 30% of deaf learners of school going age are enrolled in school when compared to 78% enrolment for visually impaired learners and 97% for physically impaired learners

The following are some of the reasons for this disparity.

- The communication mode for persons who are deaf is sign language which is known by a negligible number of people.
- Cameroon Sign Language does not exist and so Cameroon uses American Sign Language (ASL) making it challenging to explain some concepts that are strictly Cameroonian.
- There are very few Sign Language Interpreters or Practitioners in Cameroon
- Mainstream teachers do not know sign language and lack sufficient knowledge in teaching children who are deaf.
- Parents cannot take active part in the education of their deaf children because of the communication barrier.

Children who are deaf were therefore considered uneducable and are still considered so in some communities, resulting in the majority not attending school.

##### **Evaluation of the education of deaf children in the Northwest Region**

The education of pupils with hearing impairments started as a pre-school training unit in 1995 and was later registered as a primary school with the name Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Integrated School for the Deaf (ISFD) in the year 2000 with the aim of meeting the educational needs of children with hearing impairments in the Region and beyond who were out of school because mainstream schools at the time could not meet their learning needs. In 2017, ISFD was renamed CBC Inclusive School and Sign Language Centre (ISSLC), Mbingo and its scope was widened to provide inclusive primary education as well as sign language training to resource teachers and members of the wider community. Since its creation, ISSLC has trained and graduated 146 pupils. In 2006, ISSLC established linkages with the Baptist Comprehensive High School (BCHS) Njinikejim Belo to provide inclusive secondary education to learners with hearing impairment. Later in 2012, further linkages were created with public secondary schools: Government Bilingual High School (GBHS) Bamenda; and GBHS Kumbo.

## **Situation of learners with Hearing Impairments**

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned efforts, the number of children with hearing impairments in primary, secondary and tertiary education remains disproportionate, in part, due to the structural and systemic discrimination the deaf community faces on the Cameroon education landscape.

Educating students who are deaf and hard-of-hearing in Cameroon is challenging with many difficulties, such as, lack of remedial and educational programs, insufficient skilled teachers, unequipped schools, and lack of instructional and assessment methods informed by universal design. Furthermore, these groups of students study the same curricula designed for hearing students and they have the same educational cycle. Even though there are differences between hearing-impaired students and hearing students in how they receive and transmit information, in what academic content is accessible to them they continue to be exposed to the same curriculum as their non-deaf peers. Although deaf and hard of hearing pupils and students need appropriate instruction by teachers trained to work with deaf and hard of hearing students to meet their English learning needs, the absence of certified training programs for sign language interpreters has made it not an interesting profession, hence few sign language interpreters are available to support the inclusion of a growing population of deaf learners. This has made meaningful participation of deaf learners in mainstream schools difficult resulting in poor results and eventually, high school drop-out rates. This experience is twice as worse for deaf girls compared to their male counterparts given the broader social dynamics underpinning gender relations in Cameroon.

### ***A. Introduction***

With a view to sustainably promote the education of deaf and hard of hearing girls in Cameroon, the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services is launching the **Wil Schrijvershof Scholarship Fund**. Endowed through the generosity of Wil Schrijvershof, her friends and family, this fund is intended to provide funding for the educational expenses of girl children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

### **Purpose**

The aim of this scholarship is to support girls who are deaf and hard of hearing to access and participate in education in the Cameroon education system.

### ***B. Requirements***

- The Wil Schrijvershof Scholarship Fund will be administered by the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services (CBCHS) through the setting up of a scholarship selection and award committee.
- The CBCHS Scholarship Committee shall review applications, select and shortlist candidates based on merit to the CBC Director of Health Services for approval.

- Equal opportunity will be given to applicants from all regions of Cameroon with preference to applicants from poor families.
- The scholarship shall be awarded to 5 deaf and hard of hearing girls every academic year.
- The Wil Schrijvershof Scholarship will fund 90% of the total cost of accessing quality education for an academic year while the recipient family covers 10%.
- Scholarships are for the exclusive use of the winner to be applied to tuition, books, fees and other educational expenses.
- The CBCHS will disburse the scholarship funds to the recipient's parent/guardian and provide necessary support to facilitate efficient usage.
- Given its focus on quality education, this scholarship will support education in recognized schools with a track record in providing quality education to deaf and hard of hearing children.

### **C. Eligibility**

To be eligible for the Wil Schrijvershof Scholarship you must:

- Be a citizen of Cameroon.
- Be a deaf and hard of hearing girl
- Show proof of financial needs in accessing education.
- Be enrolled in any of the approved primary schools (ISSLC Mbingo, Buea School for the Deaf, Holy Rosary Primary School-Akum, CBC Nkwen.
- Not be a recipient of another educational support for learners with disability.

### **D. How to apply**

- Application forms can be accessed directly through the CBCHS website: [www.cbchealthservices.org](http://www.cbchealthservices.org) on the Scholarship Application page or gotten in hard copy from the directorate of health services, CBC, Baptist centre, Nkwen.
- Applications open in May and are due no later than 12:00 p.m. on July 30 every year.
- Complete applications shall consist of
  - o Completed application form.
  - o Medical report and picture of applicant
  - o Disability card
  - o Prove of admission
  - o Assessment report of costed educational need completed by a social worker
  - o Photocopy of parents' national identity card.

### **E. Award of scholarships**

- Successful applicants shall be informed of their awards by August 15 and list of award winners vulgarized on the CBCHS website and notice boards of the regional delegations of Basic and Secondary Education.
- An award ceremony shall be organized on an appropriate date ahead of the start of the academic year.





