



Name: Billian Nyuykighan Njodzeka

Country: CAMEROON, Central Africa

Date of birth: 7th July 1972

Home address: Nkwen-Bamenda, NW Province

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I was brought up in the NW Province with 4 sisters and 3 brothers. My parents were peasant farmers and we depended on farm produce for a living. They work all year round and have remained poor because yields are always very low and they lack the agricultural know-how to increase productivity. The prices they have been able to charge for their produce has always been very small. A particular problem is that they are unable to afford proper medical treatment when they are ill.

My father had to sell some of his assets in order to pay my school fees. After obtaining high school qualifications I spent one and a half years working hard for my parents on our farm. During this period our crop yields were high and my parents were able to send my junior brothers to school.

I then left for Bamenda, the capital of the NW Province, and stayed with my sister, Eliniel Veye. I was able to get a job with an insurance company named La Mediatrice and later obtained temporary employment with the CCEI Bank as a cashier. In both these jobs my monthly salary was less than £40 and yet I had to give money to my parents to support my younger brothers.

My parents had to terminate my studies, partly for financial reasons but also because they came under pressure from my uncles who said that it was not good to educate a girl child because she might get pregnant or marry and the family would then get nothing from her.

My parents now regret that they did not sponsor the "girl child" who now helps to support them in their old age. My husband and I are also paying the fees of my younger brother at Dchang University. I hope to help change the attitude in our society that boys should get preference over girls when families decide education priorities for their children. I also wish to build the capacity of women, youths and handicapped people to use computers as this will help them find employment opportunities. I hope to share my experiences with other FIOH members.

I married Ndzerem Stephen in 1996 and I am grateful to him for helping me realise many potentials I never knew I had; notwithstanding my low level of education. He is still building my capacity to help disadvantaged people in our society. My present family consists of my two children, my husband, mother-in-law and father-in-law, my brother and my cousin helping to take care of my children and myself.

I am presently working for SHUMAS, a local NGO for which my husband is the General Co-coordinator and co-founder. SHUMAS is involved in a wide range of development issues - women and agriculture, environmental protection and management, primary health care and social welfare activities. I work with deprived children, marginalised children physically disabled children through scholarship, sponsorship and resettlement schemes. I also work as a secretary in the main office and as a field worker.

Personal Data

Husband: Stephen Ndzerem (General Co-ordinator of Strategic Humanitarian Services)

Children: Boy - Njodzeka Hennock Burinyuy; Girl - Njodzeka Jains Leinyuy

Education

Nseh Presbyterian School - school leaving certificate after 7 years education

Christ the King High School in Kumbo - Royal Society of Arts and London Chamber of Commerce qualifications (LCCI stage III)