

## **BICO REPORT JANUARY 2012 TO JUNE 2012**

This report highlights the activities that BICO has conducted in the six months of the year 2012 (January to June).

### **AHSI TASKSHIFTING**

There is an ongoing enhanced supervision of health works in health centres in Mulanje. The supervision started in the year 2010 after the health workers were trained in the Taskshifting project. The supervision is conducted by the ophthalmic clinical officer based at Mulanje District Hospital who conducted the trainings. The OCO supervises the health workers in the health centres in his routine visits to the health centres which are done weekly. The Taskshifting trainings were done in two districts (Mulanje and Machinga) but enhanced supervision is being done only in Mulanje district. Machinga district was set as a control.

In the year 2012, the enhanced supervision did not start well because of the fuel crisis which affected the whole country such that the OCO who conducts the supervision could not go to the health centres. This has affected data collection which the OCO does in the supervision visits. The table below shows a summary of the visits to the health centres since 2010.

#### **Summary of supervision visits to Health Centres in Mulanje since October 2010**

<b>Name of HC</b>	<b>Dates Visited</b>	<b>Number of visits</b>
Chambe	25/11/2010, 28/04/2011, 14/07/2011	3
Kambenje	25/11/2010, 28/04/2011, 29/09/2011, 15/12/2011	4
Muloza	18/11/2010, 07/07/2011, 08/12/2011	3
Namasalima	18/11/2010, 21/04/2011, 07/07/2011, 22/09/2011, 08/12/2011, 01/03/2012	6
Mbiza	11/11/2010, 30/06/2011, 15/09/2011, 01/12/2011	4
Thuchila	04/11/2010, 20/01/2011, 26/01/2011, 07/04/2011,08/09/2011	5
Chinyama	11/11/2010, 30/06/2011, 18/08/2011	3
Namulenga	04/11/2010, 07/04/2011, 08/09/2011	3
Lujeri	28/10/2010, 31/03/2011, 31/03/2011, 01/09/2011, 17/11/2011	5
Mimosa	28/10/2010, 31/03/2011, 28/07/2011, 16/06/2011, 13/10/2011	5
Mulomba	21/10/2010, 24/03/2011, 09/06/2011, 25/08/2011, 14/11/2011	5

Chonde	02/12/2010, 07/06/2011, 06/10/2011, 21/12/2011	4
Bondo	09/12/2010, 28/07/2011, 13/10/2011	3
Naphimba	09/12/2010, 01/09/2011, 17/11/2011	3
Nkomaula	15/11/2010, 20/05/2011	2
Dzenje	30/12/2010, 17/03/2011, 18/08/2011	3
Milonde	23/10/2010, 08/04/2011, 08/04/2011, 11/08/2011	4
Mpala	23/12/2010, 11/08/2011	2
Thembe	17/03/2011, 02/12/2011, 16/02/2012	3
Namphungo	05/05/2011	1
Chisitu	07/06/2011, 06/10/2011	2

### **CHILDREN FOLLOW-UP IN CHIKWAWA**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, 2012 BICO organised a trip to Chikwawa district for the children whom BICO has been following-up. These are the children who were identified with eye problems in the year 2006 in a pilot study conducted by Dr. Kalua. The main objective of the trip was to interview the children and assess their eye conditions.

There were 13 children that were identified in the pilot study. One of these 13 children died and one could not be traced by the HSAs whom were contacted to find out whether the children were around or not. The HSAs were able to verify the availability of 11 children whom were arranged to be interviewed on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March. On this day the parents the parents whose child died were also interviewed to find out if the child died of eye related conditions.

Everything was well arranged in that the HSAs who verified the availability of the 11 children were informed in advance to tell the children and their parents that the team from BICO will come to see them and that they have to come to the designated places (Ngabu Rural health centre and at Nchalo).

There were supposed to be 8 children to be interviewed at Ngabu rural health centre but only 4 were present. However the team managed to follow one child to his village and interviewed him there. Three children from the same family were interviewed at Nchalo. These three

children had surgery in the year 2009 and were supposed to be given glasses but they did not get the glasses. On this day the parents were advised to borrow transport money for the children to get the free glasses at Lions Sight First Eye Hospital. They were also told that the borrowed money will be refund. Despite the advice, the three children have not yet gotten glasses. The parents of these children have called several times to get the children to Lions Sight First Hospital and each time the parents keep on saying that the children will come on such a day but it has not happened until now.

In total 9 children out of 13 were interviewed. 5 of the interviewed children are male and 4 are female. For those children who did not turn up, it was agreed that the HSAs create an opportunity with the children so that they could be interviewed by phone.

Since the team came back from Chikwawa there has been communication with the HSAs to link with the children to interview them but this has been a challenge in that only one child has been interviewed making the total to be 9. One HSA reported that the parents of one child refused to have their child interviewed. Two children are still being followed up although there are challenges which make the process difficult. One challenge is communication with the people who identified the children. The person who identified the child does not have a phone and said the child lives far from where she lives. First time communication with this person was through HSA's phone where the person appeared to remember the child and agreed to be called another day but on that day the HSA went to her house but she was not there and this has happened several times. Sometimes the HSA herself is not in the village and sometimes her phone could not be reached.

In another case the HSA who works in the village does not have a phone, the only communication with this HSA is through another HSA at Ngabu health centre. This HSA was given the phone number to give to the person who identified the child but there has been no feedback. The HSA who linked this HSA has been called a several times about his fellow HSA but said he has not been told anything by his fellow HSA and he tried to remind him and he said he will give feedback.

## **TRACHOMA SURVEY IN SALIMA**

In the month of April, 2012 BICO conducted a trachoma survey in Salima district in the central region of Malawi. The survey was funded by World Health Organization and it lasted for about two weeks (2<sup>nd</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2012).

A total of twelve ophthalmic clinical officers from various districts were recruited to examine people in the selected villages and collect data on questionnaires. The ophthalmic clinical officers were grouped in teams of two. The total number of teams was six. During the survey, about 889 households were visited and a total of about 2844 individuals were examined and data for the examination was collected on the questionnaires.

At the end of the survey the completed questionnaires were taken to BICO offices in Blantyre for entry into epidata. Data will be entered into epidata by two individuals (double entry). Each person will enter all the data separately and then the two data entry personnel will do a consistency check (cleaning) and remove all errors that might have occurred during entry. The cleaned data will be given to the Principal Investigator who is also the director for BICO. The Principal Investigator will be responsible for further action on the data (analysis and reporting of the findings of the survey).

## **DONATION OF MATTRESSES AND MOSQUITO NETS TO NSIYALUDZU RESOURCE CENTRE IN NTCHEU DISTRICT**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, 2012, BICO in conjunction with its partners (Lions Club of Limbe, Robray Malawi and Viki Mak from New Zealand) donated 15 Mattress, 5 mosquito nets and educational materials to children at the Resource centre at Nsiyaludzu LEA primary school in Ntcheu district. These materials were delivered to the Resource centre at Nsiyaludzu primary by the director of BICO on behalf of the above mentioned BICO partners.

On the day of delivering the materials, the director of BICO was accompanied by a team of two ophthalmic clinical officers who screened the children at Nsiyaludzu resource centre and Gumbu primary school. Nsiyaludzu primary school is an inclusive primary school; it caters for both visually impaired children and those with normal vision. However the children with visual problems are accommodated in the hostels that are at the school and there is a resource centre at the school for the visually impaired children.

In total there are 35 visually impaired children at Nsiyaludzu resource centre. Among these, 20 are boys and 15 are girls. The ophthalmic clinical officers screened the children that were present and they were 33 in total. The remaining two children were said to have fallen sick and went to their homes. Among the 33 that were screened 3 children were found to have cataract and needed to undergo surgery. The Ophthalmic clinical officers advised the teachers to tell the parents of the children that the children need to benefit from the operations that will be done in Lilongwe in June, 2012. They also told the Ophthalmic clinical officer at Ntcheu to consider the children when the date of the operations in Lilongwe is due so that they could be picked and undergo surgery in Lilongwe.

When the team from Blantyre arrived, they were welcomed by the Supervisor at the resource centre and other teachers. The team was led to the resource centre where the supervisor made welcome remarks and introduced fellow teachers to the team. After the supervisor had made the introductions a member of the team from Blantyre introduced the rest of the members. After the introductions were made the BICO director took time to explain about the donation and then the handover ceremony of the mattresses and educational materials was conducted.

The mattresses were handed over to the supervisor of the resource centre on a ceremony which was conducted in the resource centre. In attendance at the ceremony were the head teacher, deputy head teacher, Primary Education Advisor (PEA), other teachers from the school and the 33 visually impaired children. After the handing over ceremony, the BICO director and the team were taken to the kitchen where the meals for the 35 children are prepared and then to the dining hall where the children take their meals. The kitchen and the dining is one building only a wall separates the two. The building is old and the kitchen lacks the cooking materials. The dining hall has only three old tables and there are only a few chairs which are not in good condition.

From the kitchen and dining hall the team was taken to the girls' hostel which is an old building and small as well. The hostel did not have enough mattresses for all the 15 girls but thanks to the timely donation of the 15 mattresses on this particular day which means now all the girls will sleep comfortably on the mattresses. After visiting the girls' hostel, the team was taken to the boys' hostel which is a modern and nice structure though it does not have running water. The building has the taps but they haven't been connected to water pipes. At the time of the visit the building did not have electricity but the supervisor said the wiring was underway and the building will have electricity soon.

From Nsiyaludzu LEA primary school, the team travel to Ntcheu boma where the team members had lunch at a restaurant. After lunch the team went to Gumbu LEA primary school where there is also a Resource centre which has 5 visually impaired children. This school also caters for other special needs children who are accommodated in the hostels at the school. There are two modern hostels (one for boys and one for girls). At this school the director for BICO delivered educational materials. The Ophthalmic clinical officers screened the five children that are admitted to the resource centre and other children whom were told about the screening and had waited for the team to be screened. Among those that were screened at Gumbu LEA primary school, 2 were also told to benefit from Cataract surgeries in Lilongwe in June, 2012 while one was told to go to Blantyre for a proper assessment on the eyes.

### **CATARACT SURGERIES IN MULANJE**

BICO also supported two days eye operations in Mulanje District hospital between 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> April 2012. Operations were funded by the Rotary Club of Limbe and 22 cataract surgeries were performed.