BICO OPTICAL AND LOW VISION AT DAEYANG LUKE HOSPITAL IN LILONGWE

PROVISION OF SPECTACLES AND LOW VISION DEVICES TO CHILDREN

A long standing partnership between BICO and International Eye foundation (IEF) in USA has extended to the central region of Malawi where children will benefit from refractive and low vision services, with funding from USAID.

BICO received a sub-grantee from IEF in 2009 to explore global challenges in accessing refractive and low vision services. Since then, BICO has become the main implementer in providing spectacles and low vision services in Malawi, in collaboration with supporting partners. BICO strength lies in providing community eye health, and so far has established low vision and refractive services in Blantyre, Zomba, Mangochi and Ntcheu districts where children are able to get free glasses and low vision devices. These services are now being expanded to Lilongwe.

In November 2017, BICO Optical clinic and low vision centre was opened at Daeyang Luke hospital, in Lilongwe, behind Malawi institute of management (MIM), which is 16km away from the main Lilongwe town. This is a general mission hospital, established with funding from Korea, and has been in existed for about 8 years. Despite it being operational, and having a room for eye examination, there has never been an optical shop and low vision services offered at this unit. After discussion with the hospital Director, it was agreed that a room would be allocated to BICO, so that it can be fully demarcated and renovated as an optical centre and low vision clinic. This would allow BICO to operate independently and concentrate on the funded project. BICO would have to contribute to renovating the office space, and also bring human resource. Renovations work started in December 2017 and was completed in January 2018, and the clinic and low vision become functional in January 2018. The allocated room was demarcated in to the reception room, eye examination and LV rooms and optical room; The doors were fixed and painted; and secured with Tredoors, burglar bars and locks, tables and shelves were brought in, and the display stands, frame rackets and mirror were fixed. Four staff were identified (optometrists, optometry technician, ophthalmic clinical officer and fitting technician. The following equipment were installed in the clinic:

- Visual acuity testing devices
- Logmar tests
- Hand edger for lenses
- Trial lens set
- Trial frame
- Retinoscope
- Direct ophthalmoscope
- Lensometer
- Cross cylinder
- Low vision devices
- Frames
- Lenses
- Receipt books
- Order books
The clinic then opened its doors, with a clear message that children below 14 years would fully benefit freely from all services; while those aged 15 and above would pay to sustain the program.

Since its inception, over 300 people have passed through the clinic, and several children have benefited from refractive and low vision services.

Below are some pictures of the clinic and the services being offered.
BICO Eye clinic equipment Daeyang
Poster displaying low vision services offered by BICO at Daeyang Luke Hospital
A child been assessed for refractive services
Low vision assessment in action
Training a child on how to use low vision devices
BICO optometrists assessing an albino child in Lilongwe
Some of the children benefiting from services

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