

BICO 2013 Annual Report Summary

2013 was a very busy year but successful year for BICO. Dr Khumbo Kalua (Research director) and other staff of BICO (Menard Phiri, Ranneck Singano, Limbani Mitengo, Paul Chipeta, Alfred Mbwinja and Christopher Ndembo) worked very hard to accomplish BICO's mission of contributing to the prevention and control of blindness in Malawi and neighbouring countries in the Southern part of Africa through conducting practical research, teaching, training, consultancy and advocacy in eye care delivery.

Some of the activities in 2013 included the following:

January 2013

Training in Epidata (data management software). Menard Phiri, BICO projects coordinator trained doctors at College of Medicine undertaking the M.Med Ophthalmology postgraduate training and also trained staff of KCCO in Moshi, Tanzania in Epidata. Epidata is a free software that can be used to enter data and then the data can be imported into various statistical packages (Stata, SPSS, Access, Excel etc).

Visit to BICO by Prof Robin Bailey from London School of Hygiene to discuss the new Trachoma Project in Mangochi.

February 2013

BICO annual board meeting was held in the first week at Chez Mackey Restaurant in Blantyre and progress towards Projects were discussed. A new board chairman was appointed and it was agreed that he facilitates the registration of BICO with bodies responsible for overseeing NGO work in Malawi.

Dr Kalua travelled to Ethiopia for certification as the Trainer of Trainer for Malawi in Trachoma for the Global Trachoma Mapping Project. Dr Anthony Solomon certified the training in Wolkite outside Addis Ababa, a Trachoma endemic area supported by ORBIS.

March 2013

BICO fully accepted as a member of the Council for Non- Governmental Organisation (CONGOMA) in Malawi.

Dr Susan Lewallen visited BICO Lions Sight first Hospital and conducted training for the Global Trachoma Project. Four trainers of trainers were identified and trained.

BICO participated in a Trachoma Planning workshop in Mangochi at Sand N Sand Hotel organised by the Ministry of Health in which BICO was required to justify its capacity as the preferred NGO to implement the Trachoma mapping in Malawi

February to April 2013

BICO Visits to the Low vision Centres in Ekwendeni (northern Malawi), Nsialuzu (Central Malawi) and Montfort (Southern Malawi) and correcting visual impairment in children under the Project funded by the Lions of Wide Ganzen (Netherlands) and Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO).

April

Dr Kalua's visit to London School of Hygiene and Tropical medicine for new project on Trachoma in conjunction with the University of California San Francisco, USA. Visit to the Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. BICO moved offices to its new premises at

Hetherwick Building complex, Henry Henderson Institute (HHI) in Blantyre in readiness for the Global Trachoma Mapping project.

May

Prof Russell Stothard from Liverpool visited BICO on a two week field work in Nsanje District involving Trachoma and Schistosomiasis Research.

June

BICO registered and fully accepted by the NGO board as a Health NGO in Malawi.

Visit by Karin Van Dijk (CBM low vision Consultant) from Netherlands to assess progress of low vision project in Malawi. Karin was in Malawi for three weeks and visited all the resource centres that the project was targeting.

During the visit a low vision workshop was organised in Lilongwe at Kalikuti Hotel, facilitated by Karin Van Dijk and Paul Courtright. DR Paul Court right travelled from Capetown to Malawi to be part of the phase 1 low vision evaluation. The workshop attracted staff from Ministries of Health, education, Montfort resource centre and the three low vision centres involved in the project.

BICO funded eye camps in Machinga and Mangochi district hospitals and over 250 persons had free cataract surgery and regained sight. BICO had secured a grant from the Gift of Givers foundation.

July 2013

BICO signed an agreement with Sightsavers to implement the DFID funded Global Trachoma Mapping Project in Malawi. BICO was elected as both the coordinating and implementing NGO for Malawi.

Dr Caleb Mpyet from Jos University in Nigeria visited BICO to conduct certification of grader trainers under the Global Trachoma Mapping Project. Dr Caleb spent time in Nsanje with the field teams and certified four trainers in Malawi.

July 7th-September 2013

A team of workers in Malawi completed the mapping of Trachoma in 16 evaluation units (12 districts) under the GTMP. The survey attracted over 60 participants, including senior officials from Ministry of Health.

August –October 2013

A team of Optometry students from University of Canada, Waterloo visited BICO and attended a six week internship, which included visits to the different eye hospitals in Malawi and also participation in the Trachoma survey.

October 2013

A memorable month for BICO. The announcement in Brighton UK at the International Coalition for Trachoma Control (ICTC) annual meeting that BICO was accepted as a full member of ICTC. This meant that BICO can expand its role in Trachoma Control in Malawi.

Dr Kalua visited Hannover Germany and displayed BICO work on Trachoma under the European foundation for Neglected Tropical Diseases.

Dr Sarah Burr from London School visited BICO and College of Medicine, to discuss new Trachoma Project

November 2013

BICO staff monitored the Mass drug Administration in Malawi and conducted a post MDA exercise in Nsanje district, which included visiting over 400 households in several villages to verify the coverage. Dr Kalua participated in the annual meeting of the American Society for Tropical Medicine (ASTM) in Washington DC, USA.

Professor Robin Bailey and Dr John Hart visited BICO and College of Medicine to discuss the new Trachoma project.

December 2013

Visit to Kenya to discuss the African Health Systems Initiative (AHSI) funded by IDRC.

Research Publications

Staff from BICO contributed to over 11 peer reviewed articles 8 of which were accepted and approved in different journal. Five articles have already come in 2013 out and 3 will come out in early 2014. Check out publication in 2014.

Check us on

www.bicomalawi.org