

SECOND NARRATIVE REPORT ON TREATMENT OF MINOR EYE CONDITIONS UNDER WEEK of COMPASSION FUNDS IN RURAL TANZANIA, JULY to SEPTEMBER 2019



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This additional treatment package to treat patients with minor eye conditions was funded by Week of Compassion (WoC).

IMA World Health (IMA) implements SAFE Project with UKAID funds to eliminate trachomatous trichiasis (TT) in Tanzania. The SAFE Project through IMA World Health's country office in Dar es Salaam would like to express sincere appreciation to Week of Compassion (WoC) for the valuable support that made it possible for the project to diagnose and treat vulnerable rural communities with minor eye conditions during SAFE-TT outreach activities in the Mtwara region of southwestern Tanzania.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

IMA World Health (IMA) and the Tanzanian Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MOHCDGEC) implement the Surgery, Antibiotics, Facial Cleanliness, and Environmental Cleanliness (SAFE) strategy to control and eliminate Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in endemic areas. The SAFE project in Mtwara focuses mainly on the "S"-Surgery component of the strategy to eliminate trachomatous trichiasis (TT). Since inception in 2014, IMA has organized several outreach surgery camps in six councils in the Mtwara Region. The routine SAFE outreach includes: TT outreach screening camps, TT outreach surgery camps, and post-surgery follow-up visits. IMA took the opportunity of having the SAFE TT outreach camps in Mtwara to identify and treat patients with minor eye conditions. The additional SAFE treatment package was beneficial to the program and community in the following ways:

1. The additional treatment package has increased the number of patients attending the outreach camp, especially for those seeking treatment for minor eye conditions. As a result, the project identified and treated previously missed TT patients from the area.
2. The additional treatment package has increased patient satisfaction during SAFE outreach activities in the area.
3. The treatment package has helped the most vulnerable members of rural communities in the area, especially elderly who cannot travel far, to secure eye drop medications to treat their chronic eye conditions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the diagnosis and treatment of minor eye conditions during SAFE project implementation in the Mtwara Region. The additional eye care treatment package was funded by Week of Compassion (WoC) to leverage the SAFE - *trachomatous trichiasis* (TT) outreach surgery camps in the Mtwara Region. The report covers a three months period, from July through September 2019, to accomplish distribution of eye drop medications to patients with minor eye conditions in the implementing area.

The SAFE-TT outreach surgery camps held in this reporting period made it possible for IMA to accomplish distribution of eye drop medications to individuals with minor eye conditions in the area. In this reporting period the project achieved the following:

1. The SAFE Project implemented pending activities in four districts in Mtwara regions to achieve project targets in the area.
2. A total of 2,010 patients with minor eye conditions especially allergic conjunctivitis, glaucoma, bacterial infection and trauma received eye drop medication by the IMA-SAFE Project to treat minor eye conditions.
3. A total of 2,888 vials of different types of eye drop medications were dispensed to patients in need after they were screened and diagnosed with minor eye conditions.
4. The following eye drop medications were mostly dispensed to patients in this reporting period: Sodium Cromoglycate eye drop, Timol eye drop, Dexamethasone & Neomycin eye drop, Hydrocortisone eye drop, Dexamethasone & Chloramphenicol eye drop and Ciproflaxine eye drop.

INTRODUCTION

IMA World Health (IMA) and the Tanzanian Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MOHCDGEC) implement the Surgery, Antibiotics, Facial Cleanliness, and Environmental Cleanliness- SAFE strategy to eliminate blinding trachoma in endemic areas of Tanzania. SAFE is the World Health Organization (WHO) endorsed strategy to eliminate blinding trachoma. With UK Commonwealth Funds, IMA implements the ‘S’ – surgery components of the SAFE strategy in Mtwara Region and has prevented sight loss from TT to more than 7,000 individuals through corrective eyelid surgery. It is from the SAFE outreach camps that IMA met with community members from the area who sought care for common minor eye conditions including allergic eye conditions, cataract, glaucoma, and other trauma.

IMPLEMENTATION

In December 2018, Week of Compassion (WoC) first funded procurement and dispensing of eye drop medication with \$25,067. By June 2019, the program had spent much of the funds with a balance of \$11,004 to complete the budget to treat minor eye conditions in Mtwara region. From July to September 2019, the SAFE project has spent the remaining \$9,597 WoC funds to diagnose and treat 2,010 individuals with minor eye conditions in the area. With support of the previously trained SAFE eye care health workers (government eye care workers) in the implementing areas, IMA diagnosed and treated individuals with common eye conditions including allergic eye conditions, trauma, bacterial eye infections and glaucoma. Diagnosis and treatment of the common eye problems was done during the routine SAFE- outreach activities using the same TT screeners who confirmed TT cases brought to the camp by trained community case finders. The table below summarizes the number of beneficiaries and types of eye drop medications prescribed to patients with minor eye conditions in the area.

Table 1. Number of beneficiaries of WoC-funded activity in Mtwara regions, July through September 2019

Type of Medication (eye drop medication)	primary conditions treated	# of beneficiaries	# of vials/items dispensed
Sodium Cromoglicate eye drops (2%)	Allergic eye conditions especially for children	600	608
Hydrocortisone eye drops (1%)	Allergic eye conditions	316	334
Dexamethasone eye drops (0.1%)	Allergic eye conditions, trauma.	100	123
Dexamethasone & Neomycin eye drops (combined solution)	Treating swelling, redness, and itching due to inflammation	250	256
Dexamethasone &Chloramphenicol eye drops (Combined solution) (0.1%+0.5%)	Bacterial infection and other eye infections	290	312
Ciproflaxine eye drops (0.2%)	Bacterial infection or conjunctivitis, corneal ulcer	154	155
Timolol eye drops (0.5%)	Glaucoma	300	1,100
Total		2,010	2,888

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF MINOR EYE CONDITIONS

The SAFE activity focuses mainly on patients suffering from TT through eyelid surgery to correct the in-turned eyelid, which constantly scratches the cornea, causing painful and irreversible sight loss. Prior to going to the outreach site, the project through its district lead eye care person organizes community mobilization, informing the community about the service and camp dates. Village leaders also communicate SAFE outreach messages through traditional ways, by making use of village gatherings to convey program messages and by sending someone from the village to move around the street communicating program messages using a megaphone. In this way, communities in need of eye care services gather at the right place and time. In previous SAFE outreach camps, patients with other eye conditions were given referrals to seek medical attention in nearby drug shops or at a public health facility. Unfortunately, lower-level public health facilities in the area had no such medication to treat



A district lead eye care person dispensing eye drop medication to patients with minor eye conditions in one of the outreach camps in rural Tanzania.

most of the non-TT eye conditions and thus, most did not use the referral note. The WoC funds made it possible to offset the gaps by treating almost everyone who presented to the camp with minor eye conditions. Everyone in need of WoC treatment was brought to the attention of the district lead eye care person to confirm the condition prior to dispensing the appropriate eye drop

medication (photo above).

From the screening process as done through July-Sept 2019, IMA identified and treated 2,010 individuals with minor eye conditions using the WoC funding (Table 1). The IMA SAFE project officers oversee the whole process, from patient identification (both TT and minor eye conditions) to final treatment and counselling to ensure patients adhere to medical advice given. With this additional treatment package, communities where the SAFE project operates are very happy with the project, because they were no longer required to travel as often to town to access eye care services.

EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS

Table 2. Budget and Expenditure for the remaining WoC Funds

Initial Budget approved in USD by WoC Funds	Jan- June 2019 Expenditure	August- Sept 2019 Expenditure	Budget balance August to September 2019
	Jan-June Direct expenses in USD (ICR inclusive)	August-Sept Direct expenses in USD (ICR inclusive)	Budget balance Aug & Sept 2019 in USD (ICR inclusive)
\$25,067	\$15,469	\$9,598	\$0

Having spent \$15,469 from January through June 2019, the balance of \$9,598 from the initially approved \$25,067 was carried forward and spent between July and September 2019 to complete the approved WoC budget. On this last spending cycle, IMA spent \$872 on Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) and \$400 for the due allowances to government eye care health workers who dispensed the WoC medicine. This last round of spending has benefitted 2,010 individuals with common eye conditions.

SUCSESSES AND CHALLENGES

Successes

- ✚ Increased communities' satisfaction of SAFE outreach eye care services in the area.
- ✚ Raised communities' awareness on non-TT eye conditions and available treatment options.
- ✚ Increased IMA's visibility both to government officials in the area and the community at large.

Challenges

- ✚ Common complaints came from elderly with poor vision due to cataract and refractive errors, as the additional SAFE eye care treatment package could not treat these conditions. Instead, they were referred to higher-level health facilities in town for eyeglasses or cataract surgery.

WAY FOWARD

IMA is currently expanding SAFE TT eyelid surgery service into the Pwani region, projecting 2,000 eyelid surgeries of individuals with TT in the area in the next few years. In the future, if WoC could provide funds to dispense similar medication in this new region, it would be extremely beneficial to the community.