

CBM Scholarship Programme

Reporting Template

1. Basic Information

Recipients	Lions club Grevenbroich
Name of scholar	Sylvia Chifundo Siwinda
Date of submission	November 2025
University / Place of Work	Kamuzu University of Health Science, Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital-Lions Sight First Eye Hospital.
Type of Report (semi-annual/ Annual)	Annual
Reporting period (DD/MM/YYYY – DD/MM/YYYY)	September 2024 – August 2025

2. Personal and Professional Background

<p><i>Remark for the scholar: Please write 170–200 words about your personal and professional background (to be filled in and updated yearly given any new developments).</i></p>
<p>Over the past year and a half of training, I have gained invaluable experience that continues to shape my path toward becoming an ophthalmologist. With the many learning opportunities that lie ahead, I am confident that the future holds even greater promise.</p> <p>This report provides a brief overview of my experiences during the past six months of residency training.</p>

3. Screening and Surgical Skills

<p><i>Remark for the scholar: Please report about the development of your screening and surgical skills during the reporting period: number of screenings, treatments and surgeries (both minor and major). Please refer to fields where you experience progress and consistency.</i></p>				
<p>number of screenings: 170</p> <p>number of treatments: 125</p> <p>number and type of surgeries (both major and minor):</p>				
Type	No. of observed surgeries	No. of assisted surgeries	No. of surgeries operated under supervision	No. of surgeries operated without supervision

Lid reconstruction	1	-	2	5
Corneal repairs	4	-	6	3
Excisions	-	-	-	10
Evisceration	-	-	2	8
Exenteration	2	2	1	
Scleral buckle	4	2		
Cataracts	-	-	96	-
Hyphema washouts	-	-	-	2
TPR	-	-	2	-
I and D	-	-	-	3
I and C	-	-	-	2

4. Outreach Skills

Remark for the scholar: Please write 170–200 words about outreach missions during the reporting period. If possible, please inform about the number of screenings, treatments and surgeries. Please do also name the outreach sites and the specific challenges and describe your learning experience.

If no outreach missions were conducted during the reporting period simply report “Not Applicable”

In October 2025, with funding from BICO, I had the opportunity to undergo cataract training at Zomba Central Hospital under the guidance of Dr. Chinsisi Nyirenda. It was during this time that I had the privilege of experiencing how eye-outreach programs are run. An in-house camp restored vision for approximately 100 patients at Zomba Central Hospital. We also visited two district hospitals, Phalombe and Mulanje, where approximately 150 patients underwent operations. I had operated on 20 patients during these outreach programs. Learning how teamwork from different cadres made the outreach missions possible; drivers, patients’ attendants, optometrists, Nurses, ophthalmology clinicians, surgeons, and the management working towards a common goal was a great way to transfer knowledge from books to the ground. Some technical challenges faced during this time were transport. That month, our country was experiencing a fuel crisis, which meant we couldn’t reach as many clients in the far and hard-to-reach areas.

On World Sight Day 2024, I participated in vision screening activities at two schools: one in the town of Zomba and the other on its outskirts. It’s a fun way to remind schoolchildren to take care of their vision.

5. Exams and Learning

Remark for the scholar: Please write 170–200 words about relevant learning experience and exams or further academic milestones (CMEs, CPDs within the training center or elsewhere) during the reporting period and shortly explain the type of exams that you have passed/ will retake and how this affects your course progress

Over the past few months, I have had access to a variety of learning platforms, including our scheduled classes, handover meetings, case-based discussions, and departmental Continuous Professional Development (CPD). I also attend Cybersight webinars.

We had lectures from two visiting professors, one of whom specializes in optical coherence tomography, which has proven invaluable, as I can now apply it in OCT interpretations for my patients going forward.

I delivered a CPD presentation at our pharmacy department on the pharmacology of commonly used ocular drugs, a step in enhancing multidisciplinary collaboration and optimizing patient care.

In June 2025, I sat for the COECSA Part 1a Basic Visual Sciences examination. This exam is the very first step on the journey toward becoming a Fellow of the College of Ophthalmology of Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa (COECSA). It focuses on the key sciences that underpin ophthalmology—such as anatomy, physiology, pathology, optics, and pharmacology — as they relate to the eye and vision. Preparing for it gave me the chance to revisit these important basics and see how they connect to the clinical work I do every day. I was delighted to pass the exam, and even more so to have done so with merit. The result was encouraging and gave me confidence in the path I've chosen. More than just a personal achievement, it felt like a stepping stone that confirmed my readiness to take on the next stages of the COECSA fellowship process. It also deepened my motivation to keep growing in knowledge and skill as an ophthalmologist.

6. Conferences, Workshops and other Trainings

Remark for the scholar: Please write 170–200 words about all national and international conferences that you have joined during the reporting period. Please do describe what you learned or why the assistance to attend conference was beneficial for you; also refer to practical training and workshops that you have received during the reporting period that you had not reported elsewhere.

As mentioned earlier, I have an opportunity to attend a one-month, hands-on small-incision cataract surgery training at Zomba Central Hospital under the mentorship of Dr. Chinsinsi Nyirenda, made possible by funding from the Blantyre Institute for Community Outreach (BICO).

I also attended two wet labs on scleral surgeries, led by Prof. Gelisken and Prof. Kayange, in November 2024 and February 2025.

From August 20 to 22, 2025, I was fortunate to attend the 12th Annual COECSA Conference, made possible by CBM's support. Looking back, it was an eye-opening experience that reminded me of just how vast and dynamic the field of ophthalmology really is. The sessions I attended, led by world-renowned specialists, were both inspiring and practical. I found myself listening to ideas and techniques that immediately made me rethink my approach to some of my own patients. What stood out most was how relevant the lectures were to our African context—they felt directly applicable to the challenges we face in practice. The conference also gave me a perspective on how much more we can and should achieve as a nation by raising the standard of eye care. It was both motivating and humbling. A personal highlight was the opportunity to participate in an SLT simulation session, which felt like the perfect first step in building confidence and skills in this crucial procedure.

7. Research Interests and Data Collection

Remark for the scholar: Please write 170–200 words on your current research project(s) (e.g.: thesis, articles) topic, data collection and other progress.

Not Applicable

8. Other important developments or remarks

Remark for the scholar: Please inform about any other relevant developments during reporting period. Reflect on new skills or improved skills as pertains to practical learning and your surgical practice. You can also mention new developments or challenges not directly related to your academic learning but enhancing your career.

The cataract training has been the highlight of the new surgical skills. The new dexterity I gained from this training has also helped me improve my other microsurgery skills, such as corneal repairs. I have had an invaluable opportunity to practice and refine my skills in small-incision cataract surgery. Each case I performed was carefully documented and reviewed, which allowed me to identify areas for improvement and consolidate my learning. This process has not only enhanced my surgical technique but also strengthened my ability to analyze outcomes critically. As a result, I can now perform the entire procedure with growing confidence, while also managing complications effectively and calmly as they arise.

My second year in residency has also brought significant personal and professional growth. With the arrival of new registrars in the department, I have been able to share the knowledge and surgical skills I have acquired. Teaching and guiding others have deepened my own understanding and reinforced my commitment to teamwork and collaboration. This period has truly been one of accelerated development, shaping me into a more competent and confident clinician.

9. Outlook for the next reporting period

Remark for the scholar: Please give a short outlook on the upcoming reporting periods. For example: Are you planning to join specific conferences or trainings? Will you do further research or data collection?

Include recommendations to improve on your training.

At the end of October 2025, we will be joined by visiting glaucoma and vitreoretinal specialists who will conduct scleral-fixated cataract surgery wet labs, alongside supervised theatre cases to reinforce the practical skills gained. We can also train in selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT), a crucial procedure for managing glaucoma patients.

Looking ahead to the next reporting period, I aim to have completed my MMED Part I examinations and sit for the COECSA Part 1B Optics examination. Achieving these milestones will represent meaningful progress in both my academic and clinical training.

10. Expression of thanks

Remark for the scholar: Please write 3-4 sentences. It's important to include a special thanks to the "sponsor" as well as to "CBM". This field should not be used to raise concerns.

For any concerns, please promptly contact CBM contact person directly via email or telephone

A special thank you goes to the Lions of Grevenbroich for your continued, unwavering support of CBM scholars, including me. To CBM, my heartfelt gratitude for the enormous work you put into my education. I hope this report shows you a glimpse of the work you do.

11. Photos

*Remark for the scholar: Please include at least four photos showing different aspect of your work or training as separate **jpg-files** – not embedded in doc or pdf.*

Requirements:

- Each photo should have **highest possible resolution** (minimum data of 2 MB/each).
- Each person photographed needs to sign **CBM Consent form**.
- Please provide basic information (as described below):

Photo No.	Caption (Answering “W-questions”)	Consent available? Pls. indicate picture number on related CBM consent form
PXL_20241114_080832802.jpg	<p>Picture taken on the 14th of November 2024 in the QECH-LSFEH conference room.</p> <p>Myself in the picture</p> <p>Practicing a scleral buckle procedure on goat eyes.</p> <p>It was part of a wet-lab training on the scleral buckle</p> <p>Photographer (Dr Ruth Felani, Ophthalmologist Registrar at QECH)</p>	No
PXL_20241001_133634682.jpg	<p>Taken at Zomba Central Hospital-LSFEH theatre on 1st October 2024.</p> <p>Dr Chinsinsi Nyirenda (Consultant Ophthalmologist at ZCH) and I.</p> <p>In this picture, she is observing me using the proper technique for a step-in cataract surgery after she had demonstrated it.</p> <p>It is part of the hands-on cataract training I attended under her mentorship</p>	No

	Photographer (Mr. Richard Nyirenda, cataract surgeon from Mzimba district hospital)	
1001470300	<p>Taken on 20th August 2025, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at The Ethiopian Skylight Hotel.</p> <p>I am standing in front of the COESCA conference banner, excited about the experience</p> <p>Attending the annual conference</p> <p>Photographer (Dr Ruth Felani, Ophthalmologist Registrar, QECH)</p>	No
1001475822	<p>Taken on 20th August 2025, at the COECSA conference.</p> <p>I took time to participate in the SLT stimulation booth. It was part of the skill development moment.</p> <p>Photographer (Dr Sheena Khuwi, Ophthalmologist Registrar)</p>	No