



Mid Year Report 2015.

It is a challenge to run an Eye Clinic professionally in Africa.
There is much more to it than just consulting patients suffering from eye complaints.

To begin with:

How much staff is needed to run the clinic efficiently even during holidays or a disease of a co-worker?

Which level of education is necessary?

If the clinic has too little staff, the nurses are over worked, may not be attentive and the patients have to wait long hours.

Patience is a great virtue of the Cameroonian people especially those who live in the rural areas. But now a days, people in the bigger and even smaller towns are usually in a hurry. They are not prepared to wait long hours but prefer the clinics who serve them quickly and often badly.

Worse than being under staffed is over staffing. Then too many nurses have to share too little work. One nurse thinks the other one has done the work and vice versa and at the end nothing is done at all. The situation of overstaffing I find in some missionary hospitals which employ "just to help the people". The medical secretary of one Christian denomination called it even a duty of the mission to engage people.

Another aspect of overstaffing is the financial side. At the end of the month, all workers are entitled to receive a salary whether there was work to be done or none, irrespective of the financial situation of the clinic.

The second challenge is to have well trained and dedicated staff.
All people want to earn money but not all like to work.

The list of people seeking employment is long. The problem is to find the most able and the most dedicated person for the job offered.

Before we employ somebody, an interview is conducted where we ask detailed questions concerning the previous education, employment, social activities etc.

Does the person belong to a non-paid association like a youth group, a church choir or a football club?

In case we decide to employ the person, an internship period will be given. During that time, he/she will be assessed by the other staff members and the matron.

Is he/she friendly and prepared to learn? Can he/she talk to the patients in a way they understand? Is he/she willing to do overtime? Will he/she be willing to perform a task outside the job description for example sweep the floor if need be?

Thirdly, teamwork is of great significance. Every co-worker must give a helping hand to the other. No one leaves the clinic before the daily work is done and all go home at the same time.

It is important for each worker to know that he/she is a member of a big family with the common goal to give the best possible service to the patients.

Fourthly, if we have found dedicated good people to work in the clinic, they are trained in service to increase their experience and knowledge. Often they are sent for further specialist training abroad. A good formation is the foundation of a professional service.

The salaries are paid regularly according to the Government paying scale as assigned for private medical enterprises. Incentives are given and overtime paid.

Though the Government has permitted to negotiate the salary with a newly employed person, we don't apply this permission but pay according to the salary scale.

How can an employee work well without earning enough money for his daily life?

Lastly, we create an atmosphere of confidence in the clinic. If a co-worker has some difficulties concerning family, health, housing, money etc. he/she can talk to the management of the clinic about it, which then will look together with him/her for a possible solution.

The next ideas especially on the point of control will be discussed in the following mid-year report.

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