

FOUNDATION EAGLE FINAL REPORT

FUNDING FOR PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF EQUIPMENT FOR CHILOMONI HEALTH CENTRE DENTAL CLINIC, BLANTYRE, MALAWI.

Foundation Eagle reference: FF 0750

Name of charity: The AMECA Trust

Charity No: 1121240

Introduction:

Funding was granted by Foundation Eagle for the purposes of equipping a new two surgery dental clinic which was constructed as part of a total renovation of Chilomoni Health Centre, Blantyre, Malawi by AMECA.

Grant Contract date: 10th April 2025

Total Grant: £21,900

Conversion Rate, Date and Amount:

Payment for the equipment was made directly into a sterling account held by Henry Schein South Africa, therefore there was no requirement for currency conversion. (Refer to attached receipt).

Report Period: 10/04/25 – 12/12/25

Total Expenditure: £22,519.67

Project details: Equipping of Chilomoni Health Centre Dental Clinic

Chilomoni Health Centre is located approximately 4km from the centre of Blantyre, but the dirt access road to the health centre is quite challenging. Blantyre is a smallish town in southern Malawi and the health centre is funded by Blantyre District Health Office.



The rutted, un-metalled road to Chilomoni Health Centre – the truck delivering the dental equipment is in the distance

Project Period:

The capital work to create the new two surgery Dental Clinic at Chilomoni Health Centre took place concurrently with renovations to the former Maternity Unit, Outpatient Department and establishment of a new Physiotherapy clinic, commencing in September 2024 with completion in March 2025. The construction work for the Dental Clinic was funded directly by AMECA.

The work to identify funding for the additional dental equipment required, place the order, receive the goods and organise installation took place between March 2025 and December 2025.

Project Beneficiaries:

Chilomoni Health Centre currently serves a catchment population of approximately 63,300 people and is a very busy facility located in the heart of Chilomoni. The concept of establishing a fully functional Dental Clinic at Chilomoni Health Centre originated with a chance conversation in November 2023 between Ruthie Markus, CEO of AMECA and Wisdom Maiza, the Dental Therapist who was based in the former dilapidated, leaking dental surgery in the Out Patients Department. That original surgery contained a new dental chair which had never been installed because of lack of accessories and local expertise. The only dental treatment possible was dental extraction. Some background information is provided in a blog post available [here](#).

The main potential project beneficiaries include:

- Patients with dental and oral health problems living in the Chilomoni catchment area.
- The dental staff delivering treatment.
- The Dental Department at the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre, which will potentially experience a reduction in referrals of patients with conditions that can now be treated locally at Chilomoni Health Centre.
- Senior Bachelor of Dental Surgery students at Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, who can experience clinical dental practice in a community setting through an outreach teaching programme.

Project Details:

The project objective was to replace the completely unsatisfactory dental surgery in the Out Patient Department of Chilomoni Health Centre with a purpose-built, fully-equipped two surgery dental clinic in another building on the health centre footprint. The challenges that prevailed in the former dental surgery were as follows:

- The space available was too cramped for comfortable delivery of dental treatment.
- The roof leaked and the ceiling was badly damaged, with some of the ceiling panels missing and others hanging down from the rafters.
- Despite delivery three years previously, the dental chair had not been installed and was unusable.
- There were intermittent power issues, with no access to back-up electrical power from an inverter.
- There was no modern autoclave for sterilising instruments.
- Dental staff members had no area in which to sit down and take a break between patients during clinical sessions.
- There was no space to store dental consumables safely and securely.
- There was no office space, no computer, no office equipment or shelving for files.



The original dental surgery in the Out Patient Department

Project Achievements:

The first milestone for the overall refurbishment of Chilomoni Health Centre, including the new Dental Clinic, was the approval of the architect plans by the Blantyre Department of Health Management Team and by Blantyre District Council.

Construction work at the Health Centre commenced in September 2024, with the arrival of BM Contractors on site. Work on the Dental Clinic commenced in early 2025:



Construction work underway on the new Dental Clinic

Once the new internal walls were constructed and plastered, the individual components of the Dental Clinic took shape, especially once the two dental chairs available to the project were *in situ*.



Wisdom, the Dental Therapist at Chilomoni Health Centre, in one of the two surgeries, following completion of the capital works.

However, the Dental Clinic development remained incomplete from the perspective of equipment. The dental chair required a compressor and suction motor to allow it to operate and there were many other items such as X-ray equipment and, critically for safe clinical practice, instrument cleaning and sterilization equipment for the Decontamination Room that was an integral part of the design of the new dental facility, in line with modern best practice.

Discussions were held with key experts on dental surgery design and operation. This allowed a list to be compiled of the essential additional equipment required to support the full range of clinical services that fall within the scope of a fully qualified dentist, in addition to the more limited procedures for which dental therapists are trained. It was this list which formed the basis of the successful grant application to Foundation Eagle.

Following [a visit to the premises of Henry Schein South Africa](#), (refer to blog at this link), in Johannesburg, a final list of equipment was compiled and the order duly placed by AMECA. Many of the items were of Italian manufacture and there was an inevitable delay whilst some of the items were shipped from Italy to Johannesburg before onward carriage to Malawi. AMECA was able to obtain full exemption from import duty on the equipment through application to the MRA (Malawi Revenue Authority), and the equipment was also VAT-free, delivering significant savings. (Refer to attached MRA Clearance letter.)

Arrangements were made for the dental equipment to be delivered to Chilomoni Health Centre on 1st December, coinciding with a visit by Andre Wessells, a senior engineer from Henry Schein, who would lead on its installation. There was significant support with the offloading and other manual work entailed from members of the local community through the Dzuka Chilomoni Community Group. We also received support from a local engineer, Chikondi Chawinga, who had helped earlier in the year with the placement of the dental chairs in the two surgeries.

The installation of the equipment was completed successfully during the week of 1st December. The following photographs show some of the steps involved:



Unloading the truck



Unpacking the equipment



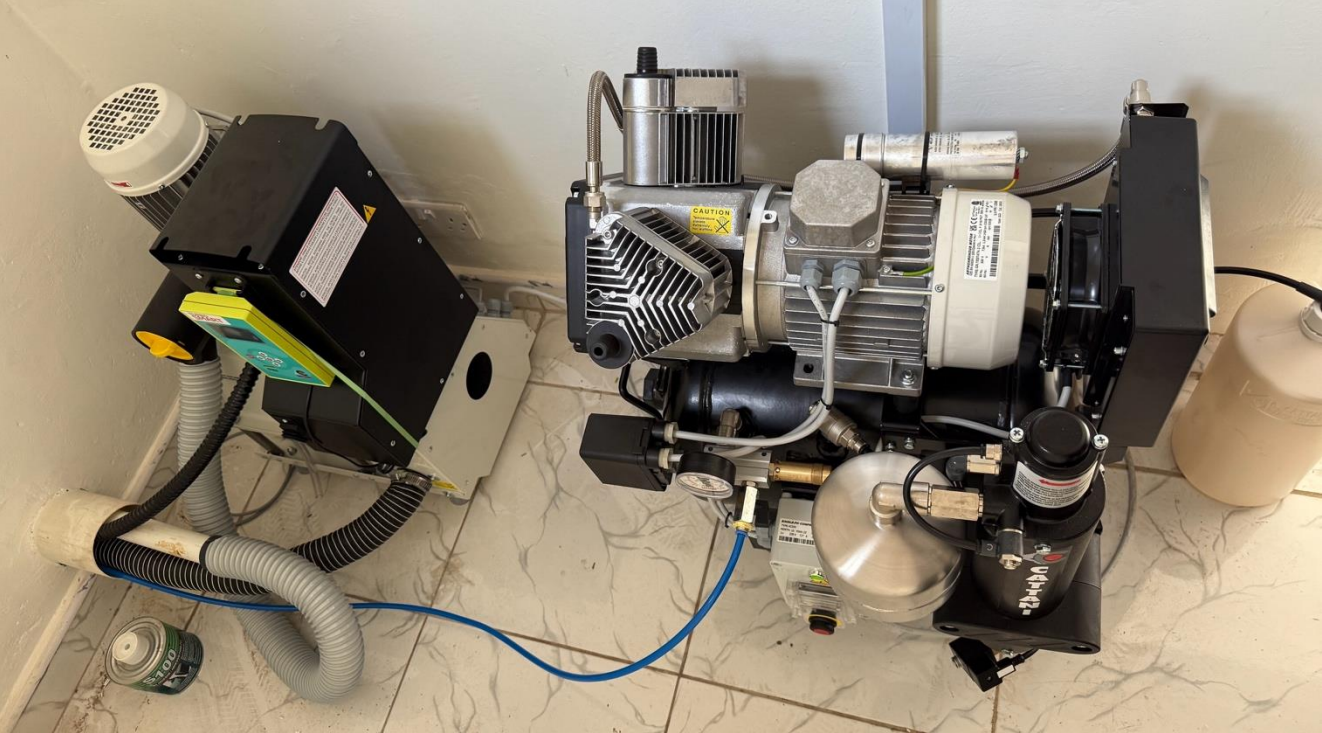
Installing instrument cleaning and sterilisation equipment in the Decontamination Room



Delivering training on the instrument decontamination process



Installing the services to link the dental chairs to the compressor and suction motor



The installed compressor and suction motor in the plant room



The assembled mobile digital X-ray unit, complete with laptop and software to view the dental images.



A panoramic photo of the state of the art instrument decontamination facility which will benefit not only Dentistry but Maternity and the Out Patient Department too.

Challenges of the project to date:

In terms of the original construction work, there were no real challenges, and the build team completed the renovations on time and with minimum disruption.

The relationship that AMECA and The MaIDent Project have established with Henry Schein South Africa is excellent and there were no challenges with the ordering, transportation or installation of the equipment.

Due to the challenges of mains electricity outages, it is essential that the Dental Clinic should have power backup, in case a dentist or dental therapist is part way through a clinical procedure when the

power fails. Separate to the funding from Foundation Eagle, an inverter was purchased and installed as part of the original capital project. This will add value to the equipment that has been purchased with the grant from Foundation Eagle.

A problem emerged with the water supply to the entirety of Chilomoni Health Centre after the refurbishment of the facilities had been completed. This has now been resolved through installation of a new water reticulation system for Chilomoni Health Centre, including the Dental Clinic. Details are available in the most recent AMECA Newsletter [here](#).

Security is an issue which has required consideration. The piping that carries the services for the dental chairs from the plant room along the back wall of the building has been bricked in to provide protection:



In addition, solar powered security lights and surveillance cameras, together with appropriate signage, are being installed around the perimeter of the building

The final stage in our journey is the appointment of a qualified dentist to join the existing dental therapist at the Dental Clinic. A detailed case has been written to support the District Health Officer in his discussions with the Ministry of Health – a copy has been submitted with this report for information. The local Member of Parliament is supportive and the Secretary for Health at the Ministry has been briefed. We are optimistic about a positive outcome.

A blog post which provides a fuller description of the dental equipment installation is available [here](#).

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Foundation Eagle Grant Final Project Expenditure:

19/08/2025	Henry Schein Dental Warehouse	£22,508.67		Refer to invoice.
		TOTAL	£22,508.67	

Summary of Estimated Budget submitted to Foundation Eagle:

Foundation Eagle Grant: £21,900

Total Expenditure: £22,519.67 (Including bank transfer charges.)

Impact:

Local reaction from the community is already very positive. This was a comment from a local resident:

“ The donation of equipment to Chilomoni Health Centre is a wonderful and much-needed contribution. It will greatly improve the services available to the community where I live. This support is truly amazing - Chilomoni Health Centre can now offer both preventive and curative dental services. May God richly bless all those who have supported Chilomoni Health Centre”.

One of the current dental interns, who gained his BDS degree earlier this year and who lives in Chilomoni said:

*“Jaw dropping!
As someone who saw what it was before this, I am impressed beyond expression. This is truly amazing”.*

The full impact of the new facility cannot be quantified until a dentist has been appointed to complete the staffing. However, the anticipated benefits and impacts are as follows:

- This is the first fully equipped dental clinic in a Malawian Health Centre, integrated with other co-located primary care facilities. It will act as a central hub, interacting with contiguous health centres and other cadres of healthcare workers. For example, oral problems are common in pregnancy and the co-location of a refurbished maternity unit with the new dental facility provides an excellent opportunity for interprofessional learning and referral. Furthermore, oral disease fit into the category of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and share common risk factors with diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. This provides excellent opportunities for interaction between dental professionals and colleagues in the refurbished Outpatient Department at Chilomoni Health Centre.
- The new Dental Clinic provides a model for demonstration to the Ministry of Health and other key stakeholders, who could replicate the core components of the dental facility in other District Hospitals and Health Centres across Malawi.
- The facility improves the working conditions for dental professionals delivering dental care within Blantyre District, allowing them to use their full scope of practice.
- The Dental Clinic improves access to high quality dental treatment for those living in the catchment area of Chilomoni Health Centre and will reduce referrals to the over-stretched Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital Dental Department.
- The facility delivers the potential for outreach teaching of BDS Year 5 students from Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, since Chilomoni is located relatively close to Blantyre. This outreach model is widely used in the UK to provide a ‘stepping stone’ for students from clinical practice in the Dental School to a more realistic primary care setting.

- The Dental Clinic will provide a base for interaction with local early learning centres and schools in Chilomoni to improve delivery of oral health teaching and to engage in dental caries prevention interventions such as supervised toothbrushing with fluoride toothpaste.
- The facility will facilitate collection of accurate oral health data, satisfying the '*Research Data and Information Management*' pillar of the National Oral Health Policy.

Moving forward, accurate data will be collected on patient attendances and treatments delivered, to allow long term monitoring of the impact of the new Dental Clinic.

AMECA feels that it has been able to achieve its objectives, as stated on the application File Form.

Continuity and Sustainability of the Project:

Chilomoni Health Centre is staffed and maintained by the Blantyre District Health Office and AMECA has no ongoing financial obligations to the Dental Clinic and its operations. This having been said, AMECA may choose, where appropriate and affordable to assist the facility over time with small donations of office equipment such as photocopy paper, pens and printer inks.

Dental treatment is expensive, and a public / private funding model is being examined, with support of the District Health Office, to allow costs of treatment to be defrayed for those less able to pay.

AMECA will consider reasonable costs associated with any training needs, particularly around management of the clinic, should these arise.

AMECA has implemented as much security of equipment as possible. A system is in place for safe storage of the keys to the Dental Clinic, including a system of signing in and out.

Chilomoni Health Centre has an active and motivated Hospital Committee, headed by an enthusiastic and conscientious Chairman. The Committee members are closely involved in the running, maintenance and security of the site, including the Dental Clinic.

The Project has long-term sustainability to the extent that it will be run by the Blantyre District Health Office. We hope that this Dental Clinic will be an exemplar for other health centres and that staff will value and nurture the facility. AMECA will continue to make routine visits and reinforce the core values which have underpinned all the renovations by AMECA at Chilomoni Health Centre.

Operational Logistics:

AMECA operates on the ground in Malawi and in the UK without offices as we work from home, neither does the charity have any staff, which minimises expenditure and maximises grant funding.

AMECA expresses its deepest gratitude to Foundation Eagle for their generous funding.



Ruth Markus
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