

ROTARY BRINGS VISION TO SARAWAK



Imagine trying to catch some fish for your livelihood when you can't even see what's in front of you, or attempting to carry out household chores or your work? This is probably something that frightens many of us. However, this is the reality that faces several people in rural areas of Sarawak, especially those in the lower income group.

In comparison, many of us tend to take our eyesight or even our five senses for granted when we should actually treat them as precious gifts. The Rotary Club of Kuching Central is certainly aware of the importance of our eyesight, and we are delighted to play a small role to protect or even bring back this gift to those in the lower income group.

Preventable blindness is one of Rotary International's areas of focus and RCKC has been carrying out its Preventable Blindness Campaign since 2008 where we have provided numerous cataract operations for free in various rural areas of Sarawak. We first started at Kapit in 2008, before moving to the Sarawak General Hospital in 2010 where we brought in patients from as far away as Sri Aman, Betong, Lundu, and



Serian. For our 2012 project, we worked together with the Sibu Hospital to carry out 100 cataract operations free of charge.

For this project, a total of 190 cataract operations were carried out in 6 rural areas of Sarawak from November 2016 to April 2017. Firstly, the local patients went through preliminary eye screenings at the local government hospitals. If they were identified as having cataract problems, they would be put onto the list of operations. The operations for the specific town would then be arranged to be carried out at the local hospital later, at no charge to the patients. Each operation took about half an hour to more, depending on the complexity of the case. The patients would be required to come back to the hospital after a week for a follow-up.

With the help of CIMB Foundation Community Link, cataract operations were successfully carried out in Serian, Sri Aman, Saratok, and Betong/Simunjan while another 52 were done in Lundu with the assistance of iM Sarawak. The club worked together with Klinik Katarak 1 Malaysia (KK1M), Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia, and the government hospitals of each area to ensure that the intraocular (IOL) lens purchased were suitable, and that the screenings were carried out. Additionally, goodie bags were given out to each patient, thanks to the generous contribution from Khong Guan Biscuits.

The club hopes to be able to continue this project in the years to come with the support with willing collaborators. Thank you to all who have helped to bring vision back to Sarawak!



Launching the Rotary Brings Vision to Sarawak project by handing over the IOL lens to Hospital Serian representatives



Rotarians packing goodie bags for the patients, courtesy of Khong Guan Biscuits



'The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.' - Proust