

28February 2011

Re: Hassan Thigo, 12 year old boy with cornea transplant. February 2011 update

Hasan Thigo is an 12 year old boy from a very poor family living in the Kawangware slums of Nairobi. His father is a casual labourer doing odd jobs when available and yet has to care for nine dependents. Hasan was detected with severe keratoconus leading to extremely poor eye sight. This affected his schooling and social life adversely. He was seen by an ophthalmologist who advised corneal transplant at the Lion's Eye Hospital in Nairobi at a cost of USD 1500. The Hospital, through the Lion's Club, agreed to subsidize the cost and charge USD 500 only. CHEPs was able to raise USD 250 through local funding. With CANAID AFRICA's donation of the remaining amount, the transplant surgery was carried out in December 2010. This was successful and, as is usual for corneal transplants, improvement in vision has been gradual. Last week his father informed me that, before the surgery, the boy used to sit right in front of his class and yet had trouble reading from the blackboard. Now he sits a couple of rows behind. His parents are happy that, with slightly improved vision, Hasan is able to socialise with his friends and play football with them, something he could not do before. I met the boy last Sunday and took his picture (below). I showed him the digital photo on the camera at about a metre distance. He could recognise the faces clearly. 'I could not see at this distance before' he exclaimed with a big smile. The surgeon at Lion's Eye Hospital informed us that the improvement in vision will be gradual over the next few months. We are hopeful Hasan will continue to progress and lead a life like any other kid in his neighbourhood. Thanks to CAN AID AFRICA's well wishers, Hasan has a chance of leading a normal life.



Hasan Thigo with his brother Ahmed and CHEPs representative



Hasan Thigo, happy at his improved vision