



# **THE FIRST CHEPs CONFERENCE & WORKSHOP**

“Education for community development”

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# INTRODUCTION

A CAMPAIGN TO RESTORE THE VISION OF  
THOUSANDS OF BLIND PEOPLE.

# BACKGROUND

- Keratokonus is caused by weakening of collagen fibres in the cornea.
- This leads to its progressive coning. Such changes in the cornea make it impossible for the eye to vision images, as the cornea contributes 2/3 of the image accommodation necessary vision by the eye.
- This results in blurring of vision, glare, halots at night, streaking of light and severe cases blindness.

# BACKGROUND cont...

- Spectacles and contact lenses are necessary to correct the defective vision and in cases of blindness, corneal transplant maybe necessary.
- Furthermore corneal blindness can also be caused by scarring of the cornea due to trauma and ulceration, which would also require corneal transplant.
- Corneal transplant is the replacement of the diseased cornea with another one from a donor.

# BACKGROUND cont...

- Although there are many qualified ophthalmologists in Kenya and state of the art facilities to perform the surgery, there is a major shortage in cornea donations, which are also insufficient. Patients are therefore forced to wait months to years for surgery, and many others remain unaccounted for among communities lacking access to eye care.

# METHODOLOGY

- In partnership with CHEPs Kenya, Lions Hospital Nairobi, efforts are underway to create awareness on the problem, and campaign for corneal donations.
- Information is being communicated to communities through public speeches in churches, and social gatherings; distribution of informative material such as leaflets; and conducting eyes camps.

# RESULTS

- Since inception of the project, over 1,500 leaflets have been distributed, and hundreds educated on corneal donations.
- As a result, 20 people have so far pledged to donate their corneas.

# DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

- According to Lions Hospital Statistics, the prevalence of blindness in Kenya is 0.7%.
- This amounts to more than 250, 000 blind Kenyans, of whom 19% (50, 000) are due to corneal diseases.
- More than half of the corneal blind are youths aged 35 years and below.



# DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION cont...

- Despite all the research and biotechnological advances, there is no alternative to corneal tissue hence corneal transplant depends solely of human donors.
- Success rates of transplant are very high and most corneal blind people regain their vision following the surgery.

# DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION cont...

- There is however widespread stigma surrounding organ donation and majority of people are unwilling to donate their corneas due to cultural, religious and social beliefs.
- Widespread publicity is therefore necessary to educate the public and encourage them to donate their corneas, in order to save the vision of many reversibly blind people.
- This is among the highest level of acts of charity, love and giving.