



Hon. Minister, Dinesh Gunawardana  
Ministry of Education  
Isurupaya, Battaramulla, Colombo, 10120  
Sri Lanka

Colombo, October 4, 2021

**Re: Call to implement the Kids and Diabetes in Schools (KiDS) project in Sri Lanka**

Dear Hon. Min. Gunawardana

On the occasion of [World Teacher's Day](#) on October 5, the [International Diabetes Federation](#) (IDF), the [International Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes](#) (ISPAD) and Diabetes Association of Sri Lanka (DASL) are calling on you and your fellow Ministers of Education and Minister of Health around the world to implement the [Kids and Diabetes in Schools](#) (KiDS) project in your respective countries. As mentioned in our previous correspondence on occasion of the International Education Day last January, the implementation of this project is particularly important at a time when school attendance has been disrupted in many countries because of the Covid-19 pandemic, and when education on healthy food choices and physical activity is essential.

According to IDF estimates, **type 1 diabetes affects over 1.1 million children, adolescents and young adults under the age of 20 – including an estimated 2,600 in your country.** People of all ages with type 1 diabetes need to inject insulin to survive. Managing diabetes requires constant attention and adjustments to food intake, exercise and medication. This can be a source of stigma – especially in the school environment. The general lack of awareness and understanding about the condition often leads to discrimination, which can be particularly difficult for children and adolescents with type 1 diabetes. In addition to the challenges posed by type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes – a condition which is often preventable and was until recently diagnosed mainly in adults – is on the rise among children and adolescents due to increasingly sedentary lifestyles. There is also confusion among the general public, who often cannot differentiate between types of diabetes. Clarification is required to reduce stigma.

**IDF and ISPAD created the KiDS project in 2013 to respond to the need to improve diabetes understanding in schools.** The ultimate objectives of this project are to improve the school experience of children living with and managing type 1 diabetes, fight diabetes-related stigma and promote healthy lifestyles to tackle type 2 diabetes.

We are proud to inform you that, to date, the KiDS project has reached almost a quarter of a million students and 20,000 teachers in at least ten countries<sup>1</sup>. We have seen that the implementation of KiDS results in an improved knowledge about diabetes management among teachers and parents, leads to healthier food choices and encourages increased physical activity in the school environment<sup>2,3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, Hungary, India, Japan, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland and UAE.

<sup>2</sup> Improving the school experience of children with diabetes: Evaluation of the KiDS project. Chinnici et al., Journal of Clinical & Translational Endocrinology 15 (2019) 70–75.

<sup>3</sup> "KiDS and Diabetes in Schools" project: Experience with an international educational intervention among parents and school professionals. Bechara GM, et al. Pediatr Diabetes. 2018 Jun;19(4):756-760.

**IDF, ISPAD and DASL are requesting Ministries of Education and of Health to implement the KiDS project at the national level to:**

- Improve the knowledge of diabetes in the school environment among students and school staff;
- Clarify the differences between types 1 and 2 diabetes;
- Improve understanding about the needs of students living with type 1 diabetes, in order to foster a safe and supportive school environment, and encourage learning and a happy school experience;
- Protect children and adolescents living with type 1 diabetes from stigma;
- Support efforts to prevent type 2 diabetes by including education on healthy food choices and lifestyles in national school curricula.

**We encourage you to visit the [KiDS project website](#) to learn more and access our recently updated resources**, including the Information pack, the NutriQuiz and the Nutritional guide.

**We count on your commitment and that of the government of Sri Lanka** to support children and adolescents with type 1 diabetes and address the growing issue of type 2 diabetes.

IDF, ISPAD and DASL stand ready to work with you and your team to ensure the health of future generations and support the sustainable development of our societies.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Andrew Boulton  
IDF President



Prof. Carine de Beaufort  
ISPAD President



Dr. Mahen Wijesuriya  
DASL Hon. Secretary