



**International
Diabetes
Federation**



Hon Ahmed Naseem
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health Roashanee Building Sosun Madu Male', Maldives
bureau@health.gov.mv

04 November, 2021

Re: Call to implement the Kids and Diabetes in Schools (KiDS) project in Maldives

Dear Hon. Nasseem,

On the occasion of the International Day Against Violence and Bullying at School, on November 4, the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), the International Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes (ISPAD) and Diabetes Society of Maldives are calling on you and your fellow Ministers of Education and Ministers of Health around the world to implement the Kids and Diabetes in Schools (KiDS) project in your respective countries. Implementation of this project is particularly important since KiDS has the potential to address diabetes-related stigma and prevent the bullying that children living with diabetes often experience¹.

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 38 in your country**. People with type 1 diabetes need to inject insulin to survive. 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, also exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

IDF and ISPAD created the KiDS project in 2013 to improve the understanding of diabetes management in the school environment and promote healthy habits to help prevent type 2 diabetes.

The ultimate objectives of this project are to improve the school experience of children living with type 1 diabetes, fight diabetes-related stigma to prevent teasing and bullying, and promote healthy lifestyles to tackle type 2 diabetes. The KiDS resources – developed with the input of international experts and a multi-disciplinary committee – have been translated into multiple languages and adapted to suit different cultures and environments.

To date, the KiDS project has been implemented through different models in at least ten countries ², reaching almost a quarter of a million students and 20,000 teachers. An assessment of the project's impact has been

¹ Andrade CJ, Alves CA. Relationship between bullying and type 1 diabetes mellitus in children and adolescents: a systematic review. J Pediatr (Rio J). 2019;95:509-18.

² Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, Hungary, India, Japan, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland and UAE.



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conducted based on the KiDS pilot experiences in India and Brazil. The introduction of the KiDS information package resulted in an improved knowledge of diabetes management among teachers, parents and classmates. In addition, it led to healthier food choices and encouraged increased physical activity in the school environment³⁴

IDF, ISPAD and DSM 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;
- Improve understanding about the needs of students living with type 1 diabetes, in order to foster a safe and supportive school environment;
- Protect children and adolescents living with type 1 diabetes from stigma, and prevent bullying;
- Support efforts to prevent type 2 diabetes by including education on nutrition and healthy food choices and healthy lifestyles in national school curricula.

We encourage you to visit the [KiDS project website](#) to learn more and access our resources, including the information packs for teachers, parents and children, and the Nutriquiz designed to help students improve and test their knowledge of nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices. We also invite you to read the [IDF Recommendations to Stakeholders for the Prevention of Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes in the School Environment](#) and the [ISPAD Guidelines for Type 1 Diabetes](#).

We count on your leadership and that of the government of Maldives to support children and adolescents with type 1 diabetes and address the growing issue of type 2 diabetes. IDF, ISPAD and DSM 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

Ms. Aishath Shiruhana
DSM CEO

³ 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.

⁴ "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.