



Press Note

Diabetes awareness program in Goa's schools sparking lifestyle changes to tackle rising Obesity trend

- *Diabthlon (marathon of food, fitness and facts on better diabetes management) held for the first time*
- *1,50,000 children understand diabetes better through 'KiDS' (Kids and Diabetes in School) Program*
- *30,000+ children participated in contests for healthy cooking and active living*

Goa, December 09, 2023. Five years ago, the very progressive Goa State had signed a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) with Sanofi India Limited (SIL) to initiate an education and awareness program about diabetes, its better management as well as healthy living amongst school children. Together with **Conexus Social Responsibility Foundation**, Sanofi India is implementing this program across Goa.

Through this Social Impact collaboration, Sanofi India's team of medical experts and local leading diabetologists have been educating and upskilling the State department's healthcare personnel serving the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) cell; and the Medical Officers of the Health and Wellness centers. Till date, **1670 teachers and principals**, and **150,000 children** across **470 schools in Goa** have been sensitized about diabetes – its prevalence and better management, as well as the benefits of healthy living. Alongside, the Directorate of Health Services also partners Sanofi India to run its international programme KiDS (Kids and Diabetes in School), to raise awareness about Type 1 diabetes amongst school children.

The need of the hour is to make diabetes education memorable enough to inspire children to adopt a healthy lifestyle, namely food with less sugar and daily exercise. Campaigns like Sakhar Free Shukrawar, STEP and Diabthlon were conceptualized to foster healthier choices amongst children and adults of Goa in innovative, memorable, and fun ways.

'Sakhar Free Shukrawar' (SFS) – a unique cooking competition amongst school children who create recipes that substitute sugar with healthier options like fig, date, honey etc. – inculcates healthy food choices amongst school children. In Season 3 of SFS this year, the competition received **2000+ applications** from across 240 schools, of which 100 were shortlisted and 10 competed in the Finale. STEP – an app-based fitness program that urges participants to clock 10,000 steps each day received **28,000 registrations** from over 240 schools in Goa.

Today, a brand-new initiative called Diabthlon has been launched. Diabthlon is a one-stop, day long marathon of food, fitness, and facts on better diabetes management. At this event, participants will learn the importance of regular blood-sugar testing, understand diabetes facts, and dispel myths, and experience a variety of healthy food and exercise options. (Ref: [ICMR](#))

[Study 2023 \(NEW\).pdf](#).

Ms. Aparna Thomas

Senior Director, Corporate Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility, Sanofi India Limited

“It is vital that we curb the rising diabetes epidemic and obesity in India with innovative learning and awareness interventions like Sakhar Free Shukrawar, STEP and Diabthlon. These initiatives have been designed to inspire sustainable lifestyle changes amongst children. Sanofi India’s public-private partnership with Goa’s Department of Health (Govt. of Goa) has helped make this program robust and large scale.”

Dr. Prashant Suryawanshi

State Epidemiologist and State surveillance officer for the State of Goa

“Goa’s population is facing diabetes-related issues that are growing at an alarming rate. A recent ICMR study shows that Goa has a weighted prevalence of 26.4% of people living with diabetes, whereas 31.3% are pre-diabeticⁱ. Therefore, it is imperative to educate children about obesity and diabetes so that they understand the benefits of eating right and exercising regularly to stay physically fit and keep diseases at bay.”

About Kids and Diabetes in School (KiDS) project

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF), the International Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes (ISPAD) and Sanofi initiated the Kids and Diabetes in Schools (KiDS) project in 2013. The aim of the KiDS programme is to bring diabetes education to schools to fight diabetes-related stigma and promote healthy lifestyles to tackle the preventable risk factors for type 2 diabetes. It is an educational program based on a global KiDS toolkit, primarily targeted at teachers, school nurses and other staff, school children (6-14 years old) and their parents. The program is implemented in Brazil, Egypt, Hungary, India, Japan, Pakistan, Poland, and UAE. KiDS is part of the Access Acceleratedⁱⁱ, a first-of-its-kind collaboration, focused on improving care for non-communicable diseases.

Sanofi – in India for India

Sanofi operates in India through two local entities, namely *Sanofi India Limited* and *Sanofi Healthcare India Pvt. Limited*. One of India’s most admired healthcare companies, we produce high quality products, have strong ethical values, run social impact programs (primarily in Type 1 diabetes and rare diseases), and have employee programs that enable professional growth, and a culture where our employees have camaraderie and share their passion for excellence. Since 1956, Sanofi has earned the trust as well as a place in 1-in-3 Indian households (if not more). Our world-class manufacturing site in Goa produces for people in India and 60+ other countries. Sanofi India has been recognized by the ‘Top® Employers Institute’ for 5 years in a row (since 2019).

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* Indian Pharma Market as per IQVIA data MAT Dec’22

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ⁱ [ICMR Study 2023](#) (NEW).pdf

ⁱⁱ <https://accessaccelerated.org/initiative/kids-and-diabetes-in-schools-kids/>