



JOHANNESBURG **DIABETES** **AWARENESS IN** **SCHOOLS**

One of the most populated cities in Africa, Johannesburg is home to approximately 4.9 million people¹. In a country where more than half the adult population is overweight or living with obesity², tackling the problem early may be the way forward.

Partners

- City of Johannesburg
- University of the Witwatersrand
- Johannesburg Junior Council
- Gauteng Department of Health



Targeting youth with a school-based awareness campaign

Diabetes prevalence projected to rise

Two decades of rapid urbanisation in Johannesburg have resulted in numerous challenges including insufficient housing, inner-city decay, high unemployment, crime, and inadequate healthcare. These challenges created an environment conducive to lifestyle-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs). In 2018, NCDs were the leading cause of mortality in the city, with diabetes as the third leading cause of mortality³.

Being aware of the burden of NCDs, Johannesburg became the first city on the African continent to join the Cities Changing Diabetes programme in 2016. Currently, 11% of the population in Johannesburg has diabetes and the Diabetes Projection Model suggests that this figure could rise to 16.2% by 2045 if action is not taken to change the trajectory⁴.

An accessible and relevant campaign

The Johannesburg Junior City Council, a Cities Changing Diabetes partner, initiated a school-based diabetes education and awareness campaign in 2017. The campaign is a performance about diabetes that has reached close to 3,000 children. Delivered in an accessible style and language, the performance helps children comprehend the seriousness of diabetes and why correct management of the illness is important.

The young junior council members who deliver the campaign were initially provided with training on type 2 diabetes by the Novo Nordisk team in South Africa. Each performance is accompanied by a healthcare

professional who is available to answer questions. As part of the campaign, children are given examples of healthy meals and exercise options and encouraged to share the information with their families and friends.


“Even though we’ve been working with communities for years, every day is different, especially when it comes to working with these young people. They have the most creative ideas on educating their peers about diabetes and obesity. It’s great to see how they find

the sessions fun while they also learn and share so much with their families.” – Layla Campbell, operational manager, Health Promotion, City of Johannesburg

New research

In 2020, the Cities Changing Diabetes partners began conducting new research at six clinics in Johannesburg to investigate the risk factors making people vulnerable to diabetes.



 www.citieschangingdiabetes.com

 youtube.com/citiesdiabetes

 twitter.com/CitiesDiabetes

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3. World Health Organization. Global Health Observatory data repository. Global health estimates: Leading causes of death. Accessed March, 2022. <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mortality-and-global-health-estimates/ghe-leading-causes-of-death>
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