

IDF breaking new ground – building BRIDGES around the world

Ronan L'Heveder

With its latest round of funding complete, the International Diabetes Federation's translational research programme, BRIDGES, has raised its game again, receiving 57 applications from 32 countries. This round of financial support ensured USD 65,000 per project and was dedicated to short-term projects lasting a maximum two years. Having undergone rigorous screening by recognized experts, nine of the projects were selected and will benefit from financial backing from IDF. Ronan L'Heveder describes the latest innovative projects to qualify for BRIDGES funding.



“The quality and geographical spread of the applications received is unprecedented,” said Professor Linda Siminerio, Chair of the BRIDGES Executive Committee. “Through this fourth round, we will address the needs of communities in new countries such as Thailand, Fiji and the Netherlands. Now, more countries will be able to reap the benefits of translational research.”

These new BRIDGES projects, like those already underway, will test innovative ideas for the prevention of type 2 diabetes (primary prevention) and the chronic, potentially disabling complications of diabetes (secondary prevention). This time around, these ideas include the use of community theatre in diabetes education in Fiji; a lifestyle intervention for overweight children in Tunisia; and the development of a peer leader system in six countries in the Caribbean.

Using community theatre to promote diabetes education and prevention in Fiji

University of the South Pacific, Fiji

Previous investigations undertaken by these researchers in the South Pacific has shown that people being treated for diabetes pay little heed to brochures, pamphlets, or posters most commonly used by Health Ministries to provide public health information. This project proposes to transmit the message of healthy lifestyles through community theatre, using professional actors to dramatize some practical approaches to dealing with illness and the best methods to prevent developing diabetes. The acting professionals will audition local community members to establish a network of community theatre ‘cells’ in Fiji to ensure the sustainability of the concept and its ability to address the increasingly severe problem of diabetes in the South Pacific region.

Pathway to Health – a lifestyle intervention to prevent diabetes in China *Shanxi Evergreen Service, Uci District, People’s Republic of China*

In response to the recent surge in the number of people in China with type 2 diabetes, this project proposes to test the feasibility of a nine-month lifestyle intervention, Pathway to Health (PATH), to reduce risks for diabetes in Chinese women. Based on the successful US Diabetes Prevention Program, the China Da Qing Diabetes Prevention Study and the accumulative work of the research team, PATH is built on the infrastructure of the recently restructured Chinese healthcare system. It is hoped that this project, if successful, will be replicated and maintained throughout China.

Integrated care through a community hospital model in Beijing

Beijing Tongren Hospital, Beijing, People’s Republic of China

Diabetes has become a major public health problem in China; chronic complications are the major causes of disabilities and death for people with the condition. It is well known that good control of blood glucose, blood pressure, lipids and aspirin use reduce the risk of complications. This project, whose methods are based on the previous Beijing Community Diabetes Study, describes a community hospital integrated management system for people with diabetes in Beijing, China, which aims to optimize control of blood glucose, blood pressure and lipids.

Bridging the knowledge gap in a rural Pakistan

United Arab Emirates University, Gilgit Baltistan Province, Islamic Republic of Pakistan

The primary prevention of chronic diseases such as diabetes, coronary heart disease and stroke is a public health

priority throughout Pakistan. Non-communicable diseases in rural populations place a particularly heavy burden on healthcare system. This project will pull together the existing expertise of team members with diverse backgrounds. Most of them already have established networks that cross disciplinary boundaries. The objective is to assess the effectiveness of home-based lifestyle intervention on blood glucose and other cardiovascular risk factors in adults aged between 18 and 64 living in a rural area.

A pioneering model to reduce cardiovascular risk in the Netherlands

The EMGO Institute for Health and Care Research, Netherlands

Medical and lifestyle interventions can reduce diabetes complications. A key component for targeting these interventions is to assess using prediction models a person's risk of developing a complication within a defined time period. But current models are flawed, targeting the wrong people for prevention of complications and resulting in both under treatment and overtreatment. This project aims to develop an improved and practically applicable prediction model for cardiovascular complications in people with type 2 diabetes. Using this model, it is hoped, treatment plans will be improved, leading to a reduction in complications and treatment costs.

Innovative diabetes education for adults with type 2 diabetes in the English-speaking Caribbean

Diabetes Association of Jamaica, Jamaica, Grenada, Antigua, Belize, St Lucia, Barbados

Diabetes is the third leading cause of death in the Caribbean. The consequent

drain on health resources is compounded by the high numbers of healthcare pro-

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fessionals, particularly nurses, migrating away from the region. So diabetes education plays an integral role in diabetes management – and a lack of education might contribute to poor management and increased complications. This study aims to evaluate existing diabetes education curricula to determine whether these are easily used by non-healthcare professional educators in each of the participating Caribbean countries.

Community-based diabetes prevention in Thailand

School of Nursing, Walailak University, Thailand

This community-based project will test a pre-designed knowledge management programme to prevent or delay of type 2 diabetes in people at high risk. This will be a sizeable project involving 32 primary care units and 2,240 people at high risk of diabetes. The participants will be assigned randomly either to the intervention programme or in the usual care group.

Protecting children in Tunisia from overweight and obesity

University Hospital Farhat Hached Sousse, Tunisia

The prevalence of diabetes is increasing dramatically throughout Tunisia in association with obesity – a key risk factor for type 2 diabetes. Worryingly, obesity among children constitutes a major public health challenge in Tunisia and worldwide. This project proposes the implementation and evaluation of

a school-based intervention to manage overweight and obesity among school-age adolescents in the region of Sousse. This one-year behavioural intervention will include components focusing on nutrition, physical activity and psychological issues.

Smile Healthy with Your Diabetes – health coaching for people with diabetes in Denmark

University of Copenhagen, Denmark

In Denmark, diabetes type 2 and oral diseases constitute major public health concerns with an increasing burden among adults. Poor oral health contributes negatively to blood glucose control; and poor diabetes management negatively affects oral health. This project aims to design and evaluate a new behavioural intervention based on oral health coaching among adults.

Bringing research in diabetes to global environments

BRIDGES (Bringing Research in Diabetes to Global Environments and Systems) is an International Diabetes Federation programme, supported by an educational grant from Lilly Diabetes. There are 38 projects underway in 35 countries thanks to IDF's support through BRIDGES. You can find a description of each of them on the BRIDGES website (www.idf.org/BRIDGES/4th-round).

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