



# Project HOPE and Diabetes in Mexico

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## Abstract

Diabetes is one of the greatest problems that is seen in Mexico and it has become one of the main causes of death in Mexico. A large amount of the population has received little education and suffer from poverty. In an area like Nezahualcoyotl, one of Mexico City's districts there are many people who suffer from diabetes and who have received minimal education throughout their lives. These people suffer from this dangerous chronic disease and do not understand their condition well enough to properly care for themselves. Project HOPE a non-profit organization has created and implemented two programs in Nezahualcoyotl. The "5 Steps to Self-Care" program educates citizens on sugar levels, weight, healthy eating, exercising, and creates relationships with professionals. The other program, "Healthy Habits for a Healthy Weight" has called for healthier eating, exercise and greater water consumption to help prevent diabetes among school children. The two programs not only address the prevention of diabetes, but also help minimize its effects. Project Hope by working with the community has been helpful in improving the lives of those who previously had a difficult time controlling the disease. The organization, community and programs have helped increase the quality of life of many Mexico City citizens.

## Background

- Diabetes affects people of all ages, however, about 35% of people living with diabetes do not know that they have it.
- A higher body mass index level and obesity could increase the likelihood of developing diabetes.
- Obesity rates and other risk factors are expected to grow in Mexico, therefore it is likely that many more people will develop diabetes and consequently die from its complications if not treated adequately.

## Program Descriptions

- 5 Steps to Self-Care: The purpose of the program is to use a 5 step strategy to educate people about diabetes risk. Over 12 weeks, the program focuses on life-long education, 'knowing the numbers' – a traffic-light system facilitates the interpretation of healthy, elevated and high levels of blood glucose, body weight, blood pressure and cholesterol healthy eating, regular exercise and active collaboration with health-care professionals.
- Healthy Habits for a Healthy Weight: The program teaches school children three main habits. These habits include eating five fruits and vegetables a day, drinking two liters of water a day and also being active for at least one hour each day.

## Five Steps to Self-Care



A. Citizen being tested for sugar levels by a Project HOPE health provider.  
 B. Mexican citizens joining together to exercise.  
 C. Project HOPE provider explaining the red, yellow, and green sugar level system to a citizen.

## Healthy Habits for a Healthy Weight



A-D. Portrays the "Healthy Habits for a Healthy Weight" program. Children are staying active in school and educators are teaching them about the body and good health.  
 E. An image used by the program to emphasize the main goals of the program including 5 fruits and vegetables per day, 2L of water per day and 30 minutes of exercise daily.

## Program Results

- "5 Steps to Self-Care" and educating program has developed peer educators who are now serving their communities through free daily exercise classes and the creation of campaigns to promote healthier meals in schools.
- By teaching children the importance of nutrition they have learned how to eat healthier and more nutritional foods for their own benefit.
- The promotion of exercise along with water consumption and healthy eating has led to a greater regulation of weight which is key to avoiding the development of obesity and diabetes.

## Conclusions

- The amount of people living with diabetes has increased greatly and rapidly over the past few decades.
- Project HOPE's programs are aimed to educate people on sugar levels, reduce obesity and help people control their condition.
- The "Five steps to self-care" programs has helped many people understand and effectively measure their blood sugar levels as well as how to eat better and how to be more physically active.
- The "Healthy Habits for a Healthy Weight" program implemented in 25 of Mexico City's elementary schools has helped educate and advocate better daily habits in children in order to better their health, reduce child obesity and reduce the likelihood of developing diabetes.

## References

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