

Arogya World Healthy Schools

Donors: Individuals, Merck/MSD

Start and end dates: 2011-2019

Total number of beneficiaries (direct and indirect): 8,000

Location: Private and government schools in urban and rural areas in North and South India

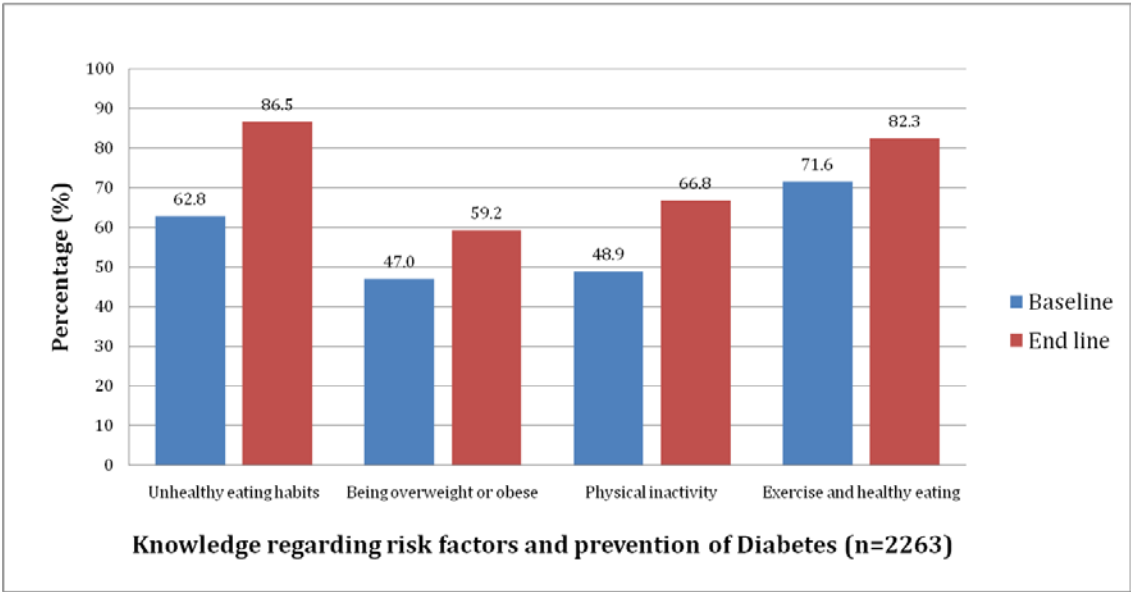
Local partners or other organizations involved with the program: HRIDAY, Agastya International Foundation



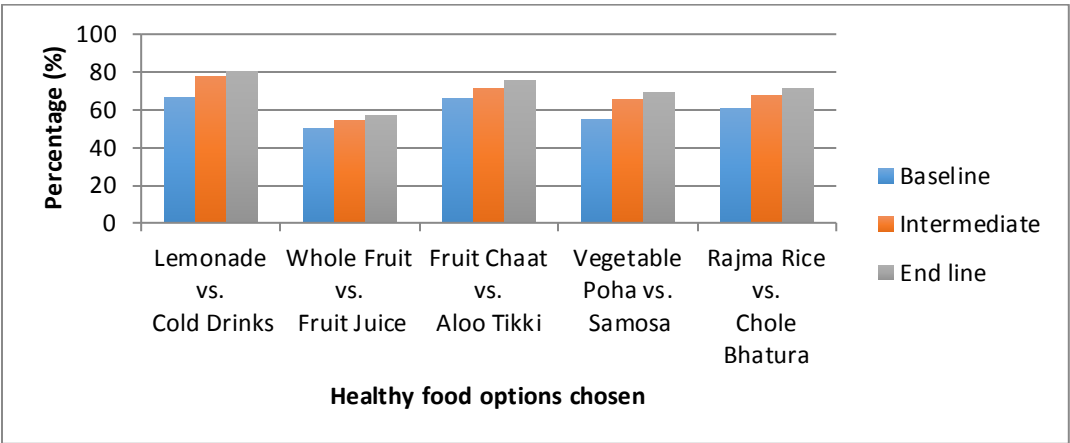
Based on a school education model for tobacco control, Arogya World established a two-year school-based program for diabetes awareness and prevention education. The **Healthy Schools** program uses influencers such as teachers and student peer leaders to reach and educate 11- to 14-year-olds about diabetes and its prevention in the school setting. Behavior change is measured in this two-year program by collecting data before, during and after the program. Healthy Schools has been successfully implemented with nearly **8,000 children** in both urban and rural areas in North and South India.

Behavior change – getting people to increase physical activity and improve dietary intake – is the prime challenge in diabetes prevention. To be effective, **we must reach young children before their lifestyle habits are fully established.**

Data reported during the first two years of the program (n=2,263) showed that **23.7% more students understood that unhealthy eating habits can put you at risk for diabetes**, that 18% more students reported that being physically inactive or not doing regular exercise can put one at risk for diabetes and **12.2% more students learned that being overweight or obese in the present can increase their future risk for diabetes.**



Behavior change was also reported: the daily intake of vegetables increased from 61.2% to 76.9%, and the **overall average servings per day of fruits, vegetables, and milk (or milk products) were significantly increased** while the serving per days of carbonated drinks, fried snack, traditional Indian sweets, and packed chips were significantly decreased. Data showed significant **increases in physical activity** – doing physical activity/games at school and exercise at home, climbing more stairs, walking to the market and playing outdoor games during leisure time -- **for both boys and girls, at private and government schools.**



Overall impact from the two-year program was estimated to be 14%. Cost for implementation has ranged from \$17 per child per year in the pilot to \$5 per child per year in the current phase. In the future we want to scale-up our program in partnership with non-profits that work with large networks of schools and our cost will be even less. This investment in establishing life-long healthy living habits makes this prevention program cost-effective.

In March 2014, Arogya World made a Commitment to the UN's *Every Woman, Every Child* Initiative, an unprecedented effort to improve the health of women and children everywhere. We committed to reaching and teaching **10,000 additional children with our Healthy Schools program by 2019**, and we are well on our way to reaching that goal.