

## YOUNG ‘DOCTOR’ PROJECT AND KIDS AS AMBASSADORS



### ABSTRACT

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This multi-tiered activity encourages elementary, high school, undergraduate, and graduate students to develop cooperative initiatives that promote hearing health and improve the quality of life in communities through academic-university tutoring.

Under the guidance of college professors, graduate and undergraduate students (Leaders) work together using a core international training kit in order to train elementary and high school students (Young Ambassadors) on hearing healthcare, prevention and early diagnosis. The Young Ambassadors, once trained, go out and educate their communities.

Based on a successful pilot launched in Brazil, this community-engagement program will empower young people around the world to become ambassadors for hearing health among their family, friends, and neighbors.

University students (Leaders) will mobilize young ambassadors through training and education sessions that focus on good hearing health practices, hearing protection and preservation, and practical communication skills such as how to “clear speak” to assist people with hearing loss in one-on-one conversations.

University student leaders participate in certification classes (perhaps for academic credit or for small stipends) to prepare them to lead training and education classes with elementary and high school students in their countries. The young university leaders then organize young student groups in their community and conduct training classes. Similar to scouting or other organized civic groups, the youths involved in the “Young Ambassadors” program receive badges and earn higher ranks as they progress in their proficiency to convey hearing health messages to their families, friends, schools, and neighborhoods.

In each country, a national youth celebrity – such as a pop singer, movie star, or sports hero – would be enlisted as spokesperson for the Hearing Health Kids Corp. Celebrity spokespersons in each region will participate in a “showcase” training session video and be present at the first graduation ceremony to build media excitement and motivate youth participation.

## RATIONALE

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A similar “Young Doctors” activity started in 2007 in the city of Tatuí, which is the inner region of the State of São Paulo. In the same year, the Project expanded to the city of Parintins (Amazon region) and in Vila Dalva (impoverished area of São Paulo city). In 2008, the city of Bauru, Sao Paulo, joined the initiative.

Habitat for Humanity currently conducts a youth program targeting young people aged 14 to 25. The program contributes to its non-profit mission of building or repairing over 600,000 affordable houses, serving more than 3 million people worldwide. The participants are involved in advocacy events, letter writing campaigns, fund raising, and working on the construction sites.

Several studies show that youths, especially older children, influence family and extended family decision-making processes. Smoking cessation and seatbelt use are among the most effective public awareness campaigns. Some of the primary motivators for action in these campaigns are children. Nowadays, kids tell their parents to stop smoking and to buckle up when driving.

## GOAL(S)

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- Create awareness of all aspects of hearing health and hearing loss among the young generation

- Motivate young people to actively speak up for hearing health and hearing loss
- Reach children and adults at a grassroots level in communities that might not otherwise have access to hearing health information or understanding

## AUDIENCES

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Young people

University students

Communities in developing countries and emerging markets such as the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China)

## EXECUTION

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### **Phase 1 - Preparation (1 year)**

Create detailed plan encompassing all aspects from university involvement, leadership training/certification and Young Ambassadors program

Sell-in to 2-3 universities in each BRIC Country

Develop detailed certification course with national hearing health organization in each market

Work with youth leaders in each market to develop market-specific Young Ambassadors training program that reflects community needs and culture considerations

Develop group logo, mission and website (customized for each country)

Identify and recruit celebrity spokesperson in each market

### **Phase 2 - Implementation (1 year and beyond)**

In each market, launch program at press event involving university, health care organization and first class of university “leadership” trainees

Promote the program via the university and outreach to community schools and youth organizations

Conduct two “sessions” of training classes per year in each university



Stage initial graduation ceremonies with national spokespersons during “Hearing Health Awareness” Month in each market

Feature select testimonials/profiles of first graduating class on website

Encourage “Hearing Health Kids Corps” members to reinforce good works via posts of activities on website

Continue to recruit and train new Kids Corp members

## DELIVERABLES

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4 universities conducting leadership training in each of the 4 BRIC countries

100 leadership trainers in first year in each country

1000 “graduate” active Kids Corps members in each country in year one