PRESS RELEASE

**Primary School Children Visit the Botanical Garden:**

**“Bananas and Tomatoes Don’t Grow in the Supermarket”**

**Tomatoes, sweet potatoes, peppers: The three nightshade plants originally come from Central and South America. Nowadays however, depending on the variety, they can be cultivated and harvested in Germany. The primary school children of the initiative "SMS. Be smart. Join in. Be fit. "of the German Diabetes Center were astonished and asked many questions during a guided tour through the Botanical Garden of the Heinrich Heine University of Düsseldorf. Biologist Dr. Joachim Busch led the children from plants to trees and flowerbeds and explained how the individual plants are cultivated and which origin they have.**

**Düsseldorf (DDZ)** – During the visit the children learned that bananas are perennials and don’t grow on trees. They learned about the eucalyptus tree, leaf miner traps for chestnut trees and the harvest of sugar peas in autumn: The children from the primary school “Am Köhnen” tasted and explored their way during the visit through the world of crops. “Many children no longer know where all the different fruit and vegetables in our supermarkets come from,” said project leader Professor Karsten Müssig. Brigitte Flach, president of the Friends of the Botanical Garden of the Heinrich Heine University of Düsseldorf, explained why she supported the project of the initiative “SMS. Be smart. Join in. Be fit." of the German Diabetes Center: “With this project, we would like to convey to the children how exciting and varied the world of plants and animals in the garden is and want to arouse their interest.”

The initiative “SMS. Be smart. Join in. Be fit." led by Professor Karsten Müssig at Düsseldorf primary schools seeks to counteract overweight/obesity and other lifestyle-related diseases in childhood and adolescence. The children earn their “aid” nutrition pilot license in cooperation with the Educational Center for Dietary Assistants of the Kaiserswerther Diakonie and take part in the exercise program for primary schools “Fitness for Kids” developed by sports scientist Professor Kerstin Ketelhut.
In addition, the pupils experience the perception of their own body in the sensory classroom of the Präha Weber School in a motor skills training course. They are also taught relaxation exercises in cooperation with the initiative “Physical Activity during School Recess” of the Dietrich Grönemeyer Foundation and the Deichmann company. The two health insurance companies IKK classic and KKH, the organization diabetesDE - German Diabetes Aid, the Sports Department of Düsseldorf and other renowned partners and prominent people support the project and provide the participating school children with additional attractive venues for learning outside of school. The patron of the initiative is Thomas Geisel, mayor of the state capital Düsseldorf. In 2015 the SMS initiative was awarded the support logo of IN FORM – Germany’s initiative for a healthy diet and more exercise, and in 2016 was awarded the GUT DRAUF label of the German Center for Health Education (BZgA).

More information about the initiative and the Botanical Garden can be found at: [www.sms-mach-mit.de](http://www.sms-mach-mit.de/) and at: [www.botanischergarten.hhu.de/freundeskreis](http://www.botanischergarten.hhu.de/freundeskreis)

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The German Diabetes Center (DDZ) understands itself as the German reference center for diabetes. It aims to contribute to the improvement of prevention, early detection, diagnosis and therapy of diabetes mellitus. At the same time, the epidemiological data situation in Germany shall be improved. The DDZ is responsible for the multi-center German Diabetes Study. It is a point of contact for players in the health sector, prepares scientific information on diabetes mellitus, and makes it available to the public. The DDZ is a member of the Leibniz Association (WGL) and is a partner in the German Center for Diabetes Research (DZD e.V.).

Recent press releases of the **DDZ can be found on the Internet at** [**www.ddz.uni-duesseldorf.de**](http://www.ddz.uni-duesseldorf.de)

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