

INSPIRING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES



HEALTH IN ACTION *South Africa*

How INMED's Health in Action Programme is improving health, nutrition, fitness and food security for disadvantaged children, families and communities



A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO BUILDING STRONG KIDS

To address South Africa's public health crisis of rising obesity rates even as hunger and malnutrition persist, INMED Partnerships for Children and INMED South Africa are proud to offer the Health in Action programme. With support from the Mondelēz International Foundation (MIF) and in partnership with local public and private entities, this programme takes a multifaceted approach to inspire and involve individuals of all ages to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Health in Action annually reaches more than 100,000 primary school children in 116 schools in 13 at-risk communities in the provinces of Gauteng and Eastern Cape in close partnership with the Departments of Education. All project sites are in low income areas and ultimately will engage approximately 137,500 children as well as their teachers, school food workers, food vendors, parents and their surrounding communities.

Health in Action programme goals include:

1. Achieving measurable improvements in health and nutritional status through participatory education.
2. Increasing access to fresh produce via school, home and community gardens.
3. Increasing participation in physical activity.
4. Improving the nutritional content of school feeding schemes via food worker training and working with snack vendors to offer healthier options.
5. Build the foundation for long-term sustainability by involving parents and other community stakeholders.

Launched in 2015, Health in Action has demonstrated measurable impacts on children's health and knowledge. A 2018 midline evaluation revealed the following positive outcomes:



increase in knowledge of health & nutrition



increase in fresh fruit consumption & 71% increase in fresh vegetable consumption



increase in regular physical activity



17% decrease in obesity among 4th graders, 60% reduction of malnourished 4th graders and 100% reduction in severely wasted 4th graders.

AQUAPONICS FOR FOOD SECURITY & OPPORTUNITY

Via the Health in Action programme, INMED and MIF are scaling a revolutionary form of agribusiness to provide food security, skills development and income generation opportunities for distressed communities in climate change regions.

INMED Aquaponics harnesses sustainable cultivation techniques to produce up to 10 times the quantity of fish and fresh produce while using 90% less water than traditionally cultivated plots. It can be scaled to any space in urban and rural environments and does not require arable soil. Aquaponics combines fish farming (aqua-culture) with hydroponics, growing plants in enriched water rather than soil.

INMED has been implementing aquaponics systems for schools, farming co-ops and municipalities for nearly 10 years to strength food security and economic development in distressed communities. Our most recent system in Soweto is the second community-based aquaponics centre with MIF.

The commercial-sized, 225m² facility will produce up to two tons of various greens and about 1,9 tons of fresh water fish annually to supplement the nutritional needs of learners at nutritionally at-risk Soweto primary schools. It also will serve as a training resource for

entrepreneurs, emerging farmers and home gardeners.

INMED's Aquaponics Centre in Soweto is modeled after a similar system at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth with MIF. It produces approximately 28 tons of various greens, 4.4 tons of tomatoes and approximately 2.1 tons of fish annually to supplement the nutritional needs of children at various schools in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan area. The aquaponics system also provides research opportunities for agricultural students from NMMU, who are studying the importance of adopting sustainable food production practices that conserve natural resources at a time when drought has been threatening the water supply and food security in the Nelson Mandela Bay region.

“By providing training opportunities for the broader community on climate-smart agriculture, we can help our people develop the skills to overcome poverty.”

— Unathi Sihlahla, Health in Action Programme Director
INMED South Africa





RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE: HIA AWARDS

Students of Charles Duna Primary School could be heard cheering throughout their New Brighton community of Port Elizabeth when they took 1st place in INMED South Africa's inaugural Health in Action Awards—and with that, the a brand new obstacle course worth R80,000 for their outdoor play yard.

In partnership with the Mondelēz International Foundation and Mondelēz South Africa, the Health in Action Awards recognise excellence and best practices among primary schools that participate in the Health in Action programme in Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg. Tshepana Primary School took top prize for Johannesburg.

Schools competing for the award were judged on how effectively and creatively they are incorporating healthy eating into classroom activities, ensuring that physical activity is part of daily activities, whether the school has a food garden and how fresh produce is used to improve children's lives. Schools also are encouraged to submit supporting evidence with their applications, such as photos, videos or posters.

A panel of independent adjudicators from Mondelēz South Africa and INMED will determine the winning entries based on creativity and originality, teamwork, evidence of involvement of parents and percentage of the school population participating.

"We were incredibly impressed to see how effectively the various schools have incorporated the three elements of the Health in Action program into their curricula," says Navisha Bechan-Sewkuran, Corporate and Government Affairs Manager, Mondelēz South Africa.

Second Prize and a R10,000 Builders Warehouse voucher went to Ben Nyathi Primary School in the Kwa-Zakhele community of Port Elizabeth and Thembalihle Primary School in Johannesburg. Third Prize and a R5,000 Builders Warehouse voucher was awarded to Inkqubela Primary School in Port Elizabeth and Langalibalele Primary School in Johannesburg.

“Our school is servicing learners from poor households where there's almost 80% unemployment,” After establishing a vegetable garden in our school with the help of parents and Health in Action, our children are much healthier.”

— Nombulelo Sume, Principal
Charles Duna Primary

SCHOOLS AS AMBASSADORS OF HEALTH

Orange Farm in Johannesburg is a community characterised by high rates of HIV/AIDS and TB, poverty, high unemployment, crime and other social ills. Many children are raised in single-parent or grandparent households with limited education and resources for self-reliance. But at Tshepana Primary School, children are thriving.

The teachers and staff of Tshepana Primary are passionate about promoting healthy eating and physical activity inside and outside the classroom, which is clearly demonstrated throughout the school with posters designed by students.

“Our school vegetable garden is a great way for children to learn about where their food comes from and to get them excited about eating fresh vegetables,” says one teacher. With the help of Health in Action Break Time Buddies, students plant vegetables that are easy to grow and that they like to eat, such as spinach, carrots and beans. The entire school takes pride in its sustainable gardening programme.

Throughout the school, teachers believe that physical education empowers learners to develop positive attitudes and that each learner can engage in some form

of physical activity to ensure a healthy, active lifestyle. The school also encourages every teacher to include healthy eating education while teaching other subjects, such as social science, mathematics and language. These are just a few examples of why Tshepana Primary was selected to receive the top prize for INMED’s Health in Action Awards.

Another school in Orange Farm also caught the attention of Health in Action Award evaluators. At Langalibalele Primary School, healthy eating and good hygiene practices form an integral part of daily school life. In addition to incorporating fresh produce from the school garden into children’s meals, the school’s cafeteria workers foster a welcoming eating environment that encourages positive social interaction among the students.

Workshops for parents teach home gardening and healthy lunch box meal preparation. Snack vendors are encouraged to include healthier snack options for sale. Students are expected to participate in physical activities, exercising every morning during before going to class—along with the school’s staff. Teachers also have formed a team for walks and marathons and have inspired their community to join in.





CULTIVATING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS IN PE

Each year, 7th grade students across the country are required to start an entrepreneurship initiative as part of their school curriculum. The students of Seyisi Primary School in Port Elizabeth used their Health in Action garden for their entrepreneurship project.

The school garden has been a key source of nutritious school meals as well as an income generator within the community. The students maintain the garden as part of their academic curricula, learning lessons on life science, math, nutrition, sanitation and environmental stewardship.

The 7th grade students decided to run the garden as a business, learning how to develop a business plan, set goals, purchase supplies and inventory, maintain their resources, market their products and generate a profit.

At the end of the project, the entire school hosted a Market Day, an event open to the community to purchase their produce, herbs, prepared foods and other items made from the garden's bounty. The event was also organized to encourage community members to plant their own household gardens for food and income.

INMED provided compost, seedlings, potting bags and soil in addition to building a seedling nursery to boost

the initiative and to support other nearby schools with seedlings for their Health in Action gardens.

"This initiative is one of many ways INMED South Africa is spurring economic development through our adaptive agriculture and Health in Action programmes," notes Dr Linda Pfeiffer, Founder and CEO of INMED Partnerships for Children.

The 7th graders set a target to earn R5,000 from this project—with half to be re-invested in the garden and the other half to fund a farewell function for the graduating students. The project was so successful that the students exceeded their target by R3,000.

“*It warms our hearts to see how eagerly the children take to school gardens—and how their enthusiasm ripples out into the community to make a sustainable impact on many lives.*”

— Dr Linda Pfeiffer, Founder & CEO
INMED Partnerships for Children

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN SCHOOL & OUT

A recent survey indicates that 4 out of 10 children in Johannesburg are obese. One way INMED South Africa is fighting this obesity epidemic is through a Health in Action initiative called Break Time Buddies.”

Break Time Buddies are unemployed youth who have graduated secondary school and are recruited by INMED via local school governing boards. In partnership with tertiary institutions, such as Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth and Wits University in Johannesburg, they receive classroom and hands-on training on the importance of physical education and strategies for encouraging children to be active. The training is followed by practical, participatory activities on how to prepare and deliver physical education lessons in primary schools.

Health in Action programme monitors work closely with each Buddy on how to plan an educational session, followed by an evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses to build their capabilities, professionalism and confidence. As a result, BreakTime Buddies are highly regarded in the schools and have sparked the interest of other communities.

“My favorite experience about being a Break-Time Buddy was giving the kids a healthy mind, developing a healthy lifestyle through ‘edutainment’ and helping our food preparers gain knowledge every day,” says former Break Time Buddy Mmabatho Molapisano. “I enjoyed working together in the school garden and classroom, serving children healthy food and giving back to the disability centres.”

Break Time Buddies have played a key role in organizing and demonstrating physical education and gardening lessons for teachers, students and parents—and many have parlayed their new skills into professional jobs in the private sector. Mmabatho, for example, earned her project manager certification and plans to open her own care centre for disadvantaged families.

“Through Break Time Buddies, I improved my skills of being a teacher ... I want to register my own company and start helping my community.”

— Mmabatho Molapisano





OUR STORY



INMED Partnerships for Children is a nonprofit international development organization that has worked in more than 100 countries since 1986 to transform the lives of disadvantaged children by improving access to health, education and opportunities for success and self-reliance. INMED's flagship programs focus on maternal/child health, nutrition and healthy lifestyles, child and youth development and adaptive agriculture/aquaponics.

INMED South Africa is a registered non-profit organization (NPC/PBO) recognized by the Department of Social Development and registered with SARS. This allows any contribution to INMED South Africa to be allocated an 18A certificate and form part of your company's CSI programme.

GET INVOLVED

If you care about improving health, inspiring hope and creating opportunities for the most vulnerable among us, we invite you to join our team!



Partner with us: Use INMED South Africa as the vehicle for your company's B-BBEE investment.



Donate: Your generous gift will help transform the future for generations of children. A monthly recurring gift will help us reach even more people in need.



Seeds for Life: Support our project to provide free vegetable seeds and training to vulnerable households to reduce malnutrition and poverty.



Volunteer: Donate your skills and time to our school and community improvement projects.

Every time you support INMED Partnerships for Children South Africa, you are changing or even saving a life! Contact jogilvie@inmed.org for more information.

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