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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

16 June 2020

### Celebrating National Youth Day with Break Time Buddies



31-year-old Dineo Mothoa from Diepsloot and 25-year-old Siphosethu Molo from the Eastern Cape are just two of the highly motivated young people in INMED South Africa's the Break Time Buddies programme. They are changing the lives of hundreds of young school children.

Break Time Buddies is a component of the school-based Health In Action programme, which was first introduced in Brazil by INMED Partnerships for Children in 2010 to provide nutrition and healthy lifestyles education for children, teachers, food preparers and parents in disadvantaged communities. The program has impacted 450 000 children in more than 1 000 schools in Brazil across its three phases. "In South Africa, with the support of the Mondelēz International Foundation, we introduced local adaptations and innovations to the Brazil model. Concepts such as community-based Break-Time Buddies and the sustainable urban farming technique aquaponics have played a vital role in curbing unemployment and solidifying community involvement," said Unathi Sihlahla, programme director for INMED South Africa.

Combined, Health in Action and Break Time Buddies (BTBs) address multiple youth development and employment-related factors, including building fundamental job skills, a work history and communications skills, according to Dr Sandra Pretorius, Health in Action programme manager. "Break Time Buddies, in particular, also addresses developmental assets such as positive values and identity, social competencies, empowerment and support for previously unemployed youth from the community," she adds.

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At present, there are six Break Time Buddies in Port Elizabeth for phase 2 of the Health in Action programme—five of which were also part of phase 1 and three Break Time Buddies in Gauteng, two of whom were part of phase 1.

There is no doubt the programme not only impacts the schools and communities it operates in, but also the lives of the young people who work in the programme. “Among the 85 out-of-school youth who have been trained and employed as Break Time Buddies to date, 52 have since gained better employment opportunities, while 12 others saved their money to pay for further education,” says Pretorius.

Dr Pretorius says the work these young people do is an asset for the schools. “They form a very important part of the Health in Action programme and for the implementation and monitoring of specific programme activities,” she says.

Mr Joe Makhafola, Head Master Diepsloot Primary school agrees saying, “Since Diepsloot primary has been working with the team from INMED it has really brought a great change to our school and our learners. We have seen a marked change in terms of healthy living and healthy lifestyles. They [the Break Time Buddies] have taught our learners and staff about nutrition, about gardening and about a healthier way to live. This partnership has really helped us, and we are looking forward to working and engaging more with INMED in the future.”

Pretorius says the BTB’s are tasked with:

- Encouraging children to take an active part in all aspects of the Health in Action (HIA) Programme areas through school activities and lessons that promote health and fitness (such as break time games and exercises and schoolwide fun days), and by guiding activities and monitoring safety.
- Implementation and development of the HIA learner-based champion clubs, e.g. ‘Eat Healthy Club’, ‘Be Active Club’, ‘Garden Club’.
- Promoting these clubs and HIA activities through regular talks and participatory actions with learners.
- Coordinating the HIA program activities with existing youth programmes in the school, e.g. ‘Soul Buddies’
- Assisting and supporting the Life Skill educators with healthy lifestyle promotion activities and lesson plans.
- Assisting with the installation and maintenance of school gardens and INMED’s Health in Action community aquaponics systems.
- Assisting with the collection of the annual assessments at the chosen HIA schools.

### Meet two of our Break Time buddies

Dineo Mothoa was first introduced to INMED South Africa in 2019 and says the experience

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has amazingly changed her life and that of her children in the Diepsloot community. Mothoa is a self-motivated young women, eager to learn new skills. She is not afraid of hard work or to go the extra mile.

“My time with INMED has given me the opportunity to find myself and realise what I really want to do with my life,” she says. “INMED is not just a job, it’s a life-changing organisation

that teaches me how to build my self well-being.” Mothoa says her passion for working with kids started when she did some work at Diepsloot primary as an assistant teacher. “Having worked with INMED, I now want to become a social worker. I want to be more involved in building these children’s lives, especially in rural areas.”

She says being involved in the schools and the community has taught her so many skills, including how to control and motivate kids in schools in Diepsloot; how to help kids develop their physical abilities; the opportunity to teach them about a healthy lifestyle through healthy eating and exercise and the chance to monitor both.

Mathoa has also been involved in the food garden community project, which has benefitted so many of the families who do not have stable incomes. “They can now rely on the food garden to put food on their table and be able to feed their families with a healthy meal,” she says. “I’m so grateful to INMED for making it all possible by providing seeds for the school and the Diepsloot community.”

Port Elizabeth born Siphosethu Molo is another Break Time Buddy star who joined INMED in 2020. Molo, who lives with her family in Motherwell, has completed a Diploma in Agriculture (specializing in Animal Production) at Fort Cox College of Agriculture and Forestry and Baccalaureus Technologiaea in Agricultural Management at Central University of Technology, Free State. She has had experience working at a dairy farm and being a math tutor in one of the institutions where she studied.

Molo is passionate about adding value. She first applied for an agricultural facilitator position at INMED, but when she was not successful, the company offered her an interim position this year as a Break Time Buddy so as not to lose her skills. Molo jumped at the chance to join INMED, which has taught her alternative ways of fighting food insecurity in her community, other than what she learnt at university.

Although she has not been with the programme long, she is helping implement and develop HIA learner-based champion clubs as well as assisting and supporting Life Skill educators with healthy lifestyle promotion activities and lesson plans. She enjoys assisting the Project Facilitator with the coordination and collection of the annual assessments at the chosen schools as well as the coordination of the training workshops for educators, food handler’s

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and gardeners. One of her key areas is also looking at ways to strengthen reporting within the project and assisting with collection and capturing of all relevant data. She is obviously eager for the schools to all return so these programmes can continue.

Phase II of Health In Action will expand the scope of the programme's youth development component for a broader audience to encompass entrepreneurship, through community-based training, educational workshops and exploration of vocational opportunities related to core program topics such as aquaponics, physical education instruction and healthy snack sales, among others. This area particularly appeals to Molo.

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### **Editor's notes:**

#### **About INMED Partnerships for Children**

INMED Partnerships for Children is a non-profit international development organisation that has worked in more than 100 countries for over 30 years to build pathways for vulnerable children and families to achieve well-being and self-reliance. Through multisector partnerships and in-country affiliates, INMED builds effective systems that deliver innovative and sustainable approaches to break complex cycles of poverty for current and future generations.

#### **About INMED South Africa**

Since 2006, in-country affiliate INMED South Africa has been working in collaboration with a wide range of corporate, foundation and government partners to transform the health, lives and futures of South Africa's most vulnerable children. INMED South Africa's programmes focus on food security, child and community health, and economic and social development via climate-smart agriculture and participatory education. Incorporated under Section 21, INMED South Africa is a registered non-profit organization (NPC/PBO) recognized by the Department of Social Development and the South African Revenue Service (SARS). For more information, visit: [www.inmed.org.za](http://www.inmed.org.za).

#### **About the Mondelēz International Foundation**

The Mondelēz International Foundation (MIF) is the charitable arm of global food and beverage conglomerate Mondelēz International. Through international partnerships with leading NGOs, MIF funds nutrition education, active play and fresh foods programs to empower more than one million children and their families around the world to lead healthier lives. For information, visit: <https://za.mondelezinternational.com/>.

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