



Welcome to the July edition of our INMED South Africa newsletter. This month, we celebrated Mandela Day on 18 July. In 2020, the essence of this day of service – take action, inspire change, and make every day a Mandela Day – is more important than ever before. There has never been a better time for individuals and groups to unite to find ways to help our neighbors in need.

This Mandela Day, our teams delivered food packs and created sustainable food solutions for families in distressed communities. With the generous support of the Mondelez International Foundation, we will continue to distribute nutrient-rich food parcels to our Health in Action schools and to those learners identified by the schools as being the most in need of assistance. We supplemented this activity with a special resource page of health and well-being videos on our website.

**CLICK HERE** to check them out.

Also in this edition, we feature the inspiring story of 54-year-old Kroonstad resident Edward Moloi Nale. Edward is the epitome of courage under extreme odds.

We hope you enjoy reading our July stories and remind you to please follow us on Facebook and Instagram to find out more about our daily activities and the committed staff who work tirelessly in the background.

*Unathi Sihlahla*  
*Director of Programmes, INMED South Africa*



## Celebrating Mandela Day with Food & Food Security

The concept of sustainable food security—which focuses on food availability, food accessibility, food utilisation and food stability—remains a critical challenge in South Africa.

“Food accessibility is one of the dimensions that we, as INMED South Africa, find to be a major challenge for households in disadvantaged communities,” says Unathi Sihlahla, INMED

South Africa's, Programmes Director. "This significantly impacts the ability of these households to obtain and consume a nutritious diet, with enough variety and an adequate supply of nutrient-dense foods."

According to STATS SA 2019, 53.4% of households were involved in planting fruit and vegetables in order to increase their access to food. The report also states that 16% of households had inadequate access to food, with 6% experiencing severe inadequacy, and that, as the number of children increases per household, the level of inadequacy also increases, where 29.6% of households with 3+ children experience inadequate access to food, and 7.6% experience severe inadequacy.

### **Sustainable food security begins at home and in the backyard**



Sihlahla says whether it is growing a single tomato plant or having a large backyard garden, growing fruit or vegetables in a home, community or school garden, provides a simple solution to improve household and individual access to nutritious food.

As a result, the INMED South Africa teams have been hard at work providing free seeds and training to disadvantaged families to grow home gardens in Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth.

"Growing fresh food from seeds is a uniquely satisfying, therapeutic and enriching experience for adults and children," says Sihlahla. "It often re-connects people with nature, it nourishes them, it provides a measure of control in accessing fresh food, provides people with dignity and can be a shared labour and source of joy."

Providing sustenance to families in need on Nelson Mandela Day and teaching them skills that will sustain their food security has been an amazing experience, says Sihlahla. "We are committed to making every day a Mandela Day to make a meaningful long-term change in the lives of those who need it most."



## **Edward Nale: Beating the Odds in Free State**



Courage can be defined in many ways. The Cambridge dictionary describes it as "The ability to control fear and to be willing to deal with something that is dangerous, difficult, or unpleasant". The story of 54-year-old Kroonstad resident Edward Moloï Nale represents the epitome of this kind of courage.

Nale, who is happily married to a supportive wife and is the proud father of two girls and two boys, has been living in Kroonstad since the 1970's in Marabastad township. Today, he leads a thriving farming cooperative and is a role model to many in the area. His life, however, was not always as happy.

Nale openly admits that in his younger days he got involved with the wrong group of friends. In 1994, he was injured in a knife attack in Welkom and was so badly injured by an opposing gang member that he ended up losing his right leg. "I was a young man at the time, and those were really dark days for me. It took a long time to accept that I will have to live with a disability. I literally isolated myself for almost two and a half years," Nale recalled. "I finally realised that I had to accept myself before others could accept me, but it was not easy. There is unfortunately still a stigma around people living with disabilities. Many people in the community didn't see me as a man and treated me like I was a young boy. I felt that they viewed me as useless, often ridiculing my manhood and calling me names."

Nale says it was only when he joined a self-help association for people with disabilities that things started to improve. "I stopped worrying about what other people said and thought and became a development disability representative, helping others like myself. I finally was appointed the Chairman of a disability forum called Nkagona, which means, 'I can do it.'"

Things improved from there. "I was always interested in farming and growing food, and in 2012 we created a cooperative comprising 23 members, eight of whom are ladies, and everyone is living with some form of disability," says Nale. After years of looking for funding and not being successful, Nale came across INMED SA, a registered non-profit organisation that is actively involved in food security.



With funding support from United States Agency for International Development (USAID), INMED introduced Nale's co-op to INMED Aquaponics® in 2018. The aquaponics growing method harnesses hi-tech cultivation techniques to produce up to 10 times the quantity of fresh produce using between 80 and 90 percent less water than traditionally cultivated plots. Aquaponics combines fish farming (aqua-culture) with hydroponics, growing plants in gravel utilising enriched water rather than soil.

"INMED taught us a different way to grow food," says Nale. "In the beginning, we were shocked to see that you could plant on crusher and not on soil. We didn't think we could plant crops there. Also dealing with fish was new to all of us. It was the first time we had seen something like that."

Apart from the production advantages of growing with aquaponics, Nale says as a person living with a disability, it is so much easier physically to work on the grow beds and handle the fish. "Both USAID and INMED really helped me a lot, and after doing nothing for so many years, I could now finally wake up with purpose. Every day we are on site to feed the fish,

clean the tanks and the ducts so the water can go through safely to the crop and allow it to grow well,” he says.

The cooperative is also not the only one benefiting from INMED Aquaponics®. In this community there are a number of vulnerable families who are struggling, and Nale’s cooperative is able to assist with fresh vegetables at a much cheaper price than going to a supermarket. Surplus food is also either taken home or distributed to those most in need. INMED has also provided the cooperative with marketing training to help market their crops as well as financial training to run the enterprise effectively and efficiently.

Nale has come a really long way from those early dark days. “I now have a loving family and I love what I’m doing, and I do everything with all my heart. I’m fully committed when I do something, and I’m doing a job that people wouldn’t believe that a person like myself can do.”

Even during the lockdown, Nale and his team have been active. “Initially I was afraid to go out because of this disease, but I listened to what President Cyril Ramaphosa told us. Every day when I go to the site, I put on my mask, use sanitiser, wash my hands regularly and make sure everything is being looked after.” Nale is not only a role model for overcoming disabilities but also on how to continue working safely during a pandemic.

## INMED South Africa in the News

Click the publication name to read the latest articles about INMED South Africa.

**Herald Live:** Township schools explore wonder of aquaponics

**Herald Live:** Herbal Bounty for Impoverished Communities

**Undercover Farming Magazine:** Youth Harness the Power of climate smart agriculture with aquaponics (p. 18)

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