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Food Security: A Desperate Issue for the Most Vulnerable



JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA (October 2020): Research by The National Income Dynamics Study shows that urban shack dwellers have borne the biggest brunt of hunger and that food security is still not back to the pre-lockdown level.

Titled the “Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey,” the study was conducted by 30 researchers at six universities in July and August. Results showed that while the lockdown devastated employment and incomes, especially for low-income earners, government grants did go some way to mitigating the impact. The rates of hunger are still, however, substantially higher than pre-coronavirus levels. The research further shows that urban shack dwellers have borne the biggest brunt of the lockdown, going hungry far more often than those in any other category.

“There is no doubt that COVID-19 has highlighted the urgent need for vulnerable families to have a more sustainable food security plan,” says Dr Sandra Pretorius, Health in Action Programme Manager for INMED South Africa. “Food insecurity and malnutrition are unfortunately a growing reality for an increasing number of children and adults in many communities across South Africa.” Health in Action is a school-based programme of INMED South Africa and the Mondelēz International Foundation.

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“In our effort to alleviate malnutrition and lack of access to nutritious food, our Health in Action programme has been giving out food parcels with nutrient-dense foods to some of our participating schools and to those learners identified by the schools as being the most in need of assistance during lockdown,” says Pretorius.

In delivering the food parcels, members of INMED South Africa observed that neighboring families were also in dire need of food security, particularly those living in substandard housing, such as a 100-year-old magogo in Port Elizabeth.

“We realized the importance of extending the reach of our school garden program and launched a pilot project in August called Seeds for Life to help vulnerable households start backyard food gardens,” Pretorius explains. The project initially targeted 40 households in Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg to receive seeds, training and assistance to grow their own produce.

“These are families who are all eager to have their own vegetable gardens, utilising the space that they have, no matter how small – even on pavements in tyres,” says Pretorius. The HIA teams, with the assistance of Health in Action Break Time Buddies, have started distributing seeds, training and support to homes in Diepsloot, Soweto and Orange Farm in Johannesburg and in Zwide, Kwa-Zakhele, Motherwell and northern areas in Port Elizabeth.

“Our goal is to raise R250 000 rand to support 2 500 families with the establishment of food gardens and seeds in Gauteng and Port Elizabeth,” says Pretorius. “It is an ambitious plan, but we believe it is achievable.”

Ends

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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. Learn more at <https://inmed.org>.

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.

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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