



February 2021



We have so much to celebrate this month. We are extremely proud of the 10-year anniversary of our first school-based INMED Aquaponics® system in South Africa. This would not have been possible without the generous investment of the ABSA Foundation and its trust in our vision of aquaponics as a solution for breaking complex cycles of poverty. You can read more about this project in our lead article. Since then, INMED South Africa has scaled aquaponics across the country, improving the lives of hundreds and thousands of people living in vulnerable communities where food security remains a key challenge.

February is also the month of love. Valentine's Day coincided with the start of Random Acts of Kindness week. Originated by the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, it is a week intended to encourage more harmony and kindness among people by offering thoughtful gestures, no matter how big or small. I challenge all of our readers to think about what you can do this month to positively impact the life of another.

Kindness takes many forms, and the gift of health is one we strive to share via our Health in Action programme. This innovative school-based programme is the initiative of INMED Partnerships for Children and the Mondelēz International Foundation. It aims to promote sustainable improvements in children's health and nutritional status, improve access to fresh foods, increase children's participation in physical activity, promote positive change in the school food environment and foster youth development and entrepreneurship.

Health in Action also applies to teachers, who are some of the most effective role models for their students. We recently challenged them to take stock of their own lifestyles and make changes to achieve better health and wellness. Read on to see how they responded.

Finally, we thank you sincerely for your continued interest and support in all of the programmes which are so close to our hearts.

Unathi Sihlahla
Director of Programmes, INMED South Africa



Celebrating 10 Years of INMED Aquaponics® at Pudumo PS

Ten years ago, INMED South Africa introduced its first school-based aquaponics system in South Africa at Pudumo Primary School in Orange Farm. Today, the system is still going strong, along with INMED Aquaponics® across the nation.

Funding for the project was provided by the forward-thinking ABSA Foundation. Using plans for a simplified system developed by parent organization, INMED Partnerships for Children, INMED South Africa brought it to life. It was a labour of love. "The tiny team of Khumbudzo Manyaga, Lucas Stander and myself dug the holes for the fish tanks and the cement grow beds foundations," recalls Janet Ogilvie, Operations Manager for INMED South Africa. "After much discussion, we then built one fish tank and two grow beds to provide healthy fresh vegetables and fish for the school meals. For many learners at this school, this was the only meal of their day."

Ogilvie recalls that the learners and teachers were fascinated by what the team was doing and were so excited to see the final product. "The day of the fish delivery created such excitement," she says. "During break time, all the learners rushed to see the fish as most had never seen a live fish before."

This was the start of a wonderful relationship between INMED SA and Pudumo Primary school. In 2016, the school hosted the launch of INMED's Health in Action programme, a school-based nutrition and healthy lifestyles initiative of INMED South Africa in partnership with the Mondelēz International Foundation. "It focuses on providing access to fresh produce

via school gardens as well as education and training for students, staff and parents on nutrition, physical fitness and making healthy choices,” explains Ogilvie.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read more.

Great Report Card for Health in Action Midline



Students reached in Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth



Teachers trained in nutrition and healthy lifestyles education



School food preparers trained in nutrition and healthy meals



Number of Health in Action schools



Increase in nutrition and health knowledge among participants



Participants consuming fresh vegetables and fruit

Our Health in Action programme with the Mondelēz International Foundation has now reached nearly 260,000 learners, 6,900 teachers and 1,477 food preparers in 342 schools in Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth.

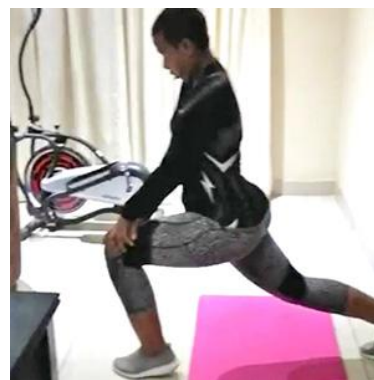
Halfway through Phase II, our midline survey results indicate an 85% increase among learners in knowledge of good nutrition and healthy lifestyles, which is testament to the efficacy of our participatory nutrition education programme, particularly during a pandemic.

Also notable in our survey was the remarkable increase in the percentage of learners who reported increased consumption of vegetables, fruit and fresh foods which was 79% at midline compared to only 16% at the start of the second phase.

Since the coronavirus pandemic, there has been a drop in physical activity among children. About 44% of children reported engaging in at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day compared to 61% at baseline. This is mainly a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

Stay tuned for more updates as our learners, teachers and Break Time Buddies return to school from summer break.

Health in Action Teachers Are Up to the Challenge



Realising that healthy teachers are the best role models for healthy children, INMED South Africa introduced an 8-week wellness challenge for educators and programme staff in Health in Action schools. Nearly 100 teachers and staff participated, documenting how they improved their nutrition, physical activity and eating habits.

Health in Action Program Manager Dr Sandra Pretorius says the challenge involved educational workshops, encouraging both programme staff and teachers in Health in Action schools to work toward a healthy weight, follow a daily exercise routine, grow their own vegetables and learn to prepare healthy meals at home. “To further motivate challenge participants, we created a WhatsApp group through which we regularly shared nutrition, physical activity and gardening tips,” she adds.

Three winners from both groups were selected, each receiving grocery vouchers ranging between R1 500 and R3 000. “At the beginning of the challenge, with the help of the knowledge gained from our nutrition workshops, I drafted a weekly menu as guide, which I followed religiously,” notes one of the teachers. “Each day, I did exercises for 30 minutes in the morning before I prepared for work and 30 minutes in the afternoon, and I made sure that I drink at least 8 glasses of water. As such, I’ve lost 8 kilograms during the challenge and I feel much healthier.”

CLICK HERE to learn the names of the challenge winners and read more.

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