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**INMED Launches Aquaponics Program at South African School Serving Children with Special Needs**

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA: Students who attend Laerskool Kempton Park had surprisingly clean hands after planting seedlings in their new aquaponics garden, which was launched today by INMED Partnerships for Children, INMED South Africa and Air Products South Africa. That's because there's no dirt!

Aquaponics is an innovative food production technique that combines aquaculture (fish farming) with hydroponics (soilless crop production in water) in a closed symbiotic system. "INMED has pioneered the use of school-based aquaponics to improve the nutrition and food security of children in disadvantaged communities in South Africa for more than 10 years," says Dr. Linda Pfeiffer, President and CEO of INMED Partnerships for Children. "Air Products was our first—and has been our most consistent—partner to expand aquaponics to primary and secondary schools."

Advantages of aquaponics include crop production at least 5 times higher than traditionally farmed plots of equivalent size, 85-90% less water consumption than traditional irrigation, low energy consumption and year-round crop production. Schools use the vegetables, herbs and fish in the children's meals, and many schools also sell surplus harvests to generate income.

The new aquaponics system at Laerskool Kempton Park, a full-service primary school that also accommodates the needs of children with disabilities, is the third such school-based system INMED Partnerships for Children and INMED South Africa have installed in partnership with Air Products.

"Air Products understands that nutritious meals at school directly affect school performance," notes INMED South Africa Operations Manager Janet Ogilvie. "Both INMED and Air Products believe that the future of South Africa is in the hands of today's kids, and for our country to be a healthy and prosperous place to live, we need to start with developing healthy children."

In addition to the aquaponics system, INMED will include a more traditional garden—with a twist. Because many of the students at Laerskool Kempton Park have a disability or learning challenges, INMED will install a special sensory garden, featuring a barefoot walking path of various textures, water and sound walls, fragrant fruit trees and vines, brightly colored plants and garden toys. Teachers will use the aquaponics system and the sensory garden as teaching tools and therapy for their students. And because aquaponics is not labor intensive and does not use chemicals or fertilizers, the children will assist with the planting and harvesting as well as care and feeding of the fish.

These teachable moments are at the core of Air Products' philanthropic endeavors. "Our corporate social investment strategy focuses on the youth and education, and INMED's program proves to educate learners in a way that is enjoyable and rewarding for the learners," says Air Products South Africa

Managing Director Rob Richardson. “We find the continued partnership extremely rewarding.” Employees from the Air Products facility nearby are already planning future volunteer opportunities around the new garden and aquaponics unit.

For more information about INMED’s aquaponics and adaptive agriculture programs, visit <https://inmed.org/aquaponics>.

**About INMED:**

INMED Partnerships for Children is a nonprofit international development organization that has worked in more than 100 countries to create a world where all children are safe, healthy, educated and have access to opportunities to thrive. Through multi-sector partnerships, INMED builds effective systems that deliver innovative and sustainable approaches to break complex cycles of poverty and generate opportunities for success. INMED’s programs in adaptive agriculture/aquaponics, maternal and child health and disease prevention and education and have made a sustainable impact on the lives of millions of children and their families since 1986.

**About INMED South Africa:**

Since 2006, INMED South Africa has implemented a variety of aquaponics and adaptive agriculture projects for schools, farming cooperatives and public/private initiatives. INMED’s success has been its ability to work in collaboration with a wide range of corporate, foundation and government partners to improve the health, lives and opportunities of tens of thousands of South Africa’s most vulnerable children. INMED South Africa is incorporated under Section 21 and is a registered non-profit organization (NPC/PBO) recognized by the Department of Social Development.

**About Air Products South Africa:**

Air Products South Africa (Pty) Limited manufactures, supplies and distributes a diverse portfolio of atmospheric gases, specialty gases, performance materials, equipment and services to the Southern African region. Air Products touches the lives of consumers in positive ways every day, and serves customers across a wide range of industries from food and beverage, mining and petrochemicals, primary metal and steel manufacturers, chemical applications, welding and cutting applications to laboratory applications.

Founded in 1969, Air Products South Africa has built a reputation for its innovative culture, operational excellence and commitment to safety, quality and the environment. In addition the company aims to continue its growth and market leadership position in the Southern African region. For more information, please contact Lizette Stokes at [stokesl@airproducts.co.za](mailto:stokesl@airproducts.co.za)



Photo caption: Students at Kempton Park primary school in Johannesburg, South Africa, plant seedlings in their new aquaponics unit, which will grow nutritious produce for their school lunches and serve as a teaching tool for core subjects.