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USAID Funds INMED Project to Improve Livelihoods of People with Disabilities in Free State

FREE STATE, SOUTH AFRICA (September 8, 2017): USAID has awarded funding to INMED Partnerships for Children to expand its Adaptive Agriculture program (AAP) for people with disabilities in the Free State province of South Africa. The program, titled “Expanding Participation of the Disabled in Climate-Adaptive Agriculture,” will integrate people with disabilities into the modern economy through new, adaptive agricultural technologies and access to financing. The program also seeks to strengthen the ability of the Disabled People South Africa (DPSA) Free State Provincial Office to better address and support the needs of its members.

INMED’s AAP represents a revolutionary approach to the interrelated issues of poverty, food security, nutrition, economic development and exclusion by preparing small-scale producers and their communities to adapt to climate change while conserving natural resources and increasing access to economic and technical assets. Key to INMED’s AAP is aquaponics, a combination of hydroponics and fish farming in a closed, symbiotic system that generates year-round crop production at least 5 times higher than traditionally farmed plots of equivalent size, consumes 85-90% less water consumption than traditional irrigation and is easily accessible to people with disabilities.

“INMED has worked in the disability sector in South Africa since 2012, delivering direct training and technical assistance in sustainable, climate-change adaptive agriculture, as well as

substantial inputs to enable members of disabled persons' cooperative groups in the Free State and Limpopo provinces to launch new income-generating enterprises," notes Dr. Linda Pfeiffer, President and CEO of INMED Partnerships for Children. "Aquaponics also has improved food security and has greatly increased the dietary diversity of people with disabilities." Combined with fundamental business skills, budgeting, planning and recordkeeping training, INMED's adaptive agriculture development model is expected to greatly improve the organizational capacity of DPSA members.

INMED's in-country affiliate, INMED South Africa, will install 2 new aquaponics systems in Free State for DPSA member cooperatives to be determined. INMED also will upgrade an earlier aquaponics system it installed several years ago in Free State for the Monyakeng Disabled People South Africa (MDPSA) cooperative.

That's great news to Rosie Mateko, a former teacher disabled by a stroke who founded MDPSA. Through the implementation of aquaponics, the cooperative turned a profit for the first time ever. With the upgrades that the USAID funding will provide, the group will continue to expand.

INMED's AAP program, says MDPSA member Ennica Mbhele, "has brought us something new that has already changed our lives. Now our project is going to grow bigger. I see many things in the future because we will be able to create more jobs for the community."

The new USAID-funded program will enable INMED to transfer lessons learned, scale the program model, increase participation and ensure sustainability through extensive train-the-trainer workshops and intensive collaboration with DPSA's Free State Provincial Office.

About INMED:

INMED Partnerships for Children is a nonprofit international development organization that has worked in more than 100 countries to create pathways for disadvantaged children and families to achieve well-being and self-reliance. 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 income generation have made a sustainable impact on the lives of millions of children and their families since 1986. Learn more at <https://inmed.org>.

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