



December 2020



Welcome to our last newsletter for the year—and what a year it has been. No one could have predicted the challenges we have all experienced, and we are all so grateful for the support and commitment of all of our teams, partners and program participants.

We are truly thankful for **USAID**, the **Mondelēz International Foundation**, **Air Products** and the **Government of South Africa** for supporting our work in 2020—and for enabling our team to adapt our activities to serve broader communities of people in need.

Despite the many challenges of the global pandemic, there is much to celebrate. Looking back at the year, the following highlights stand out:



Health in Action Pivots to Serve Families in Need

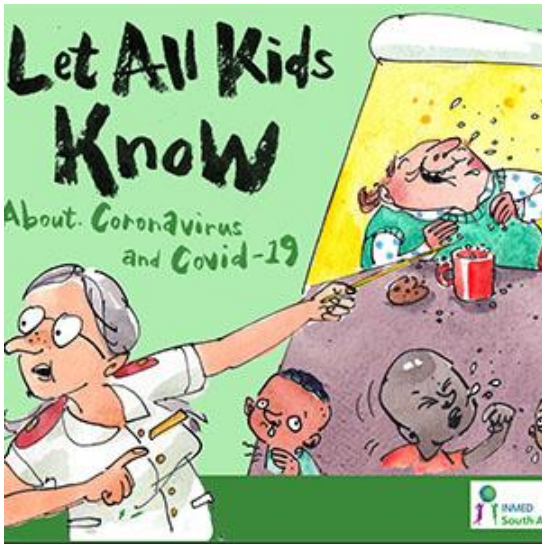
After helping roughly 140,000 children achieve better nutrition and health over the past three years, Phase II of this school-based programme with the Mondelēz International Foundation pivoted in 2020. With schools closed and more families struggling for food security during the global pandemic, our team had to find creative new ways to fulfill the mission.

This programme utilises school gardens to provide fresh, nutritious produce for school meals as well as participatory education in nutrition and healthy lifestyles. When schools closed during the lockdown, these reliable food sources for vulnerable children shut down too. Our team quickly jumped into action to distribute nutrient-dense food parcels to the families of children who attend the schools we support to help alleviate hunger and poverty, which has been growing before our eyes.

Our solution was to expand Health in Action beyond the schools to vulnerable households in the communities we serve. In late August, we launched a pilot project called Seeds for Life to help families in need strengthen their food security by starting backyard food gardens, providing free seeds, training and assistance to households in Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg. This was so successful that it was expanded and many of these families are now not only able to support themselves, but also to make a small profit by selling excess produce to their neighbors. Our goal is to raise R250 000 to support 2 500 families.

CLICK HERE to donate seeds!

COVID Resources for Kids



During lockdown our INMED teams kept very busy supporting our aquaponic sites and our school gardens around the country and updating our special COVID-19 resource pages on our website to assist families and children during this challenging time. We also launched a wonderfully illustrated COVID-19 e-book which is now available in three local languages both in hard copy and on our website. [CLICK HERE](#) to download.



Food Security & Incomes for Farmers with Disabilities

COVID could not stop the three cooperatives of disabled farmers we serve in Free State from producing bountiful crops and fish in 2020. In fact, their INMED Aquaponics® enterprises have kept their communities fed during the pandemic, with excess produce and fish donated to families in need or mourning the loss of loved ones from COVID-19.

Our work with the cooperatives in Hennenman, Kroonstadt and Monyakeng this year focused on improving access by people with disabilities, especially women and youth, to new adaptive technologies and financing that will help them generate income and integrate them into the mainstream economy. Our business training is paying off, as the farmers continue to increase their capacity and revenue, and we are so proud of their diligence.

Special thanks to USAID for all its support of this impactful project.

Deputy Minister Visits Our Kroonstadt Project

In August, Ms Thembi Siweya, Deputy Minister in the Presidency, paid a visit to the Lentsweleng Cooperative in Kroonstad to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the project. She was accompanied by MEC Bulwane, the Executive Council responsible for Agriculture and Rural



Development in the Free State, the then Executive Mayor of the District, as well as the Local Mayor and Councillors and some other senior government officials.



VIP Visit to Graaff-Reinet

We are also very proud to have hosted the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms Barbara Creecy, at our aquaponics project at one of two primary schools we serve in Graaff-Reinet, Eastern Cape. The Minister was impressed by our work, especially the educational outcomes of the project. "The work that is done by INMED at this school is commended," said Minister Creecy. "Aquaponics is the future of agriculture and can be a great learning platform for children."



AA Expert Joins INMED SA

In June, we welcomed Ntobeko Mchunu to our team as Programme Manager- Adaptive Agriculture. Ntobeko has beaten all the odds to achieve his dream of graduating with a PhD in bioresources systems from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). He was one of 1 781 graduates honoured at the University's virtual Spring Graduation ceremony in October and the only person from his small community in Tafuleni ever to achieve such an accolade.

Finally, we are so proud to announce that work has already started on our new INMED Aquaponics® Social Enterprise, which we will be launching in 2021. This is a highly ambitious

project, seed-funded by the Mondelēz International Foundation. We cannot wait to share all the details with you in an upcoming issue.

On behalf of our wonderful team at INMED South Africa, I wish you and your families a joyful and healthy break over the December holiday period. Please remember to stay safe, and we look forward to sharing our news with you in the New Year. Kindly note that from the 15 December 2020 until 4 January 2021, we will be working on skeleton staff as most of our team members will be on leave.

*Unathi Sihlahla
Director of Programmes, INMED South Africa*



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