



April 2021



While April is a time for Freedom Month celebrations, the work of INMED South Africa hasn't slowed. Our teams have been especially busy at the INMED Aquaponics® Social Enterprise (INMED ASE) in Vanderbijlpark, Gauteng.

With the seed funding provided by Mondelēz International's Sustainable Futures programme, we've been ramping up production on our farm with an additional commercial aquaponics system. This new unit will add approximately 3 tons of fresh water fish and 4 tons of leafy vegetables to the annual production capacity of our existing systems, and should be up and running by the end of May. Meanwhile, we just celebrated our first INMED ASE harvest of basil and frilly lettuce, which is now ready to sell!

We're also finishing the upgrades of a system we installed at Randvaal Primary School several years ago. It will be the first aquaponics system "spoke" connected to the ASE hub. We are grateful to our friends at Air Products, who have supported INMED Aquaponics® from the beginning and who are providing funding for the improvements at Randvaal.

This month, we are pleased to announce a new partnership with Ramizone, which operates the Konkoosies II solar energy facility located near Onseepkans in the Khâi-Ma Local municipality in Northern Cape. The partnership will support capacity building for the Pella Food Garden Cooperative, which operates our first INMED Aquaponics® system in Northern Cape.

As always, we are thankful for your continued interest and support. Please follow our progress on social media and share your thoughts with us.

*Unathi Sihlahla  
Director, INMED South Africa*



## World Health Day 2021 – Making Healthier Life Choices

Every year on 7 April, World Health Day sparks global discussion and awareness. This year, the theme was “Together we can reach a fairer and healthier world.”

At INMED, we believe health is a fundamental human right. Every person deserves to live a healthy life regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, disability, economic situation or employment. Our Health in Action programme, Seeds for Life campaign and climate-smart aquaponics projects around the country are helping to reduce obesity rates, promote healthy lifestyles and provide a sustainable food source for many disadvantaged children and communities. Our programmes have demonstrated their enormous potential to positively influence the nation’s public health.

ETV took notice and featured Health in Action on its nightly news programme for World Health Day. Click on the video above to watch the interview with INMED South Africa Programme Director Unathi Sihlahla.

## Upgrade at Randvaal, Thanks to Air Products



*Fresh produce from the traditional garden at Randvaal Primary School is nourishing students and families.*



*Randvaal food handlers help with the spinach harvest.*



*After a thorough washing, this plump fresh spinach was part of the school's meal that day.*

We are very excited that work on our first aquaponics system “spoke” connected to the INMED ASE hub has commenced. Fittingly, Air Products, which sponsored our very first system in Vanderbijlpark (now the site of the INMED ASE hub), is also funding the upgrades of our aquaponics system and traditional garden at Randvaal Primary School in the Johannesburg area.

“At Randvaal, the traditional garden growbeds are the same size as the INMED Aquaponics® system growbeds, which is very useful in comparing growth rates between the two methods, as well as comparing the time taken to harvest and the quality of the produce,” notes Janet Ogilvie, Operations Manager for INMED South Africa.

The traditional garden has produced some excellent spinach crops, yielding 27kg of the high-nutrient leafy greens, which are being incorporated into the school's meals and shared with members of the community. "Helping to provide produce for the school is so critical, as almost 45% of children attending the school are on the feeding scheme," says Ogilvie. The number of children the school supports has almost doubled from about 500 in 2015 to close to 1230 this year.

"The school needs to take care of the basic needs of the children before we can educate them. If they are hungry, they cannot learn," says Randvaal Principal Piet du Toit. He would like to make aquaponics part of the curriculum, because it feeds the body and the mind. "Over the last five years, we have taught learners how to grow their own vegetables, and many have transferred their skills to family members at home who now not only have food on the table, but also a source of income from selling their produce."

"We are extremely proud of the work at Randvaal and its connection to the new INMED ASE located on the site where we sponsored our very first INMED Aquaponics® system," says Arthi Govender, Chairperson of the Corporate Social Investment Committee at Air Products. "Our focus at Air Products is on youth and education, and this is one of three schools where INMED South Africa and Air Products have implemented aquaponics programmes."

## Ramizone Picks Up the Torch for Pella Food Garden



The Pella Food Garden, run by five female farmers on the edge of the Kalahari Desert in Northern Cape, is one of INMED's biggest success stories. The cooperative had struggled for eight years to eke a living from the parched land, but the members were barely surviving on government assistance. With funding from Old Mutual, INMED South Africa implemented a commercial aquaponics system for the group, along with technical and business training in aquaponics and adaptive agriculture for their traditional crop beds.

Within one year, the Pella Food Garden increased its revenue sixty-fold, expanding capacity to include a production and canning facility, creating jobs for community members and winning regional and national awards.

Two years after INMED's project ended at Pella, the cooperative has continued to thrive, despite the odds. In spite of drought and floods, they provide fresh vegetables to the local primary school on a weekly basis as well as a sustainable supply of affordable fresh food to the impoverished community. While much-needed rain brought relief to the drought-ravaged community, soon after they experienced a terrible outbreak of brown locusts, a typical climate change impact. Fortunately, INMED's enclosed aquaponics systems are resilient to climate change events, and the traditional garden is fully covered with shade netting, which has prevented the locusts from destroying the crops.

Through our new partnership with Ramizone, we plan to further develop the cooperative in Pella into a sustainable commercial agricultural enterprise and launch it as a satellite for the INMED ASE to provide localized training and scale INMED Aquaponics® throughout the Northern Cape. We are thankful that Ramizone is joining our INMED ASE venture.

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