



## Founder's Story

It was the suffering of children without medical care and essential medicines and a belief in the power of partnerships that prompted the founding of INMED 25 years ago. Originally an acronym for International Medical Services for Health, INMED today represents the continuity and evolution that *is* INMED Partnerships for Children—rescuing children from immediate and irreversible harm, and building strong leaders for tomorrow.

INMED's President and CEO, Dr. Linda Pfeiffer, was one of the founders of INMED Partnerships for Children, along with a group of like-minded individuals from other nonprofit organizations and businesses searching for a better way to work together to improve the health and well-being of children around the world.

Linda's vision for INMED began with her academic background. In 1981, while completing her doctorate in archaeology and anthropology with a grant from the National Science Foundation, she was leading an excavation around Rio Arriba, a remote fishing village in the mangrove swamps of southern Mexico near the Guatemalan border. The more time she spent with the villagers, the more she discovered that well-intentioned efforts to deliver medical assistance and supplies from the developed world to the underdeveloped world could at times be ineffective—and sometimes could actually cause more harm than good. One such shipment of donated medicine samples arrived in this small village with instructions in English and without an associated medical mission or a qualified recipient. Shortly after, Linda was horrified to find one parent giving her child a hypertension medicine to treat diarrhea!

On her return to the United States, Linda began by volunteering and later working for an international relief organization, where she became more convinced than ever that partnerships—with the communities served and among the nonprofits, businesses and governments involved with these communities—were the key to establishing crucial lines of communication and ensuring responsive, responsible assistance. Thus the idea for INMED was born and brought to life.

A visionary from the pharmaceutical industry, Fritz Schneider from Ciba-Geigy (now known as Novartis), provided the seed funding to start INMED. With the help of other health and international development professionals, most notably Robert Moore, an international relief and development expert; and Dr. Carlyn Collins, a pathologist specializing in community medicine, Linda founded INMED Partnerships for Children. The founding board of directors was balanced with other committed individuals, some representing grassroots, community-based action, such as Esther Peterson, who was the first to hold the cabinet post of Director of the Women's Bureau; international development experts such as Monty Yudelman, recently retired from the World Bank; and industry leaders such as Frank Pace, former head of General Dynamics.

From the outset, INMED's global medical assistance objectives included health education to complement the supply of appropriate medicines and to promote prevention. A community-based program design and global information sharing were the foundations of its programs, and within two years, children became the focus of INMED's mission, based on the development and dissemination of its *Children as Agents of Change* model. Later renamed *Healthy Children, Healthy Futures*, this integrated child- and youth-focused



model of immediate help for children combined with longer-term development efforts, represents the basis for INMED's current programs in Latin America and the Caribbean and Southern Africa.

In 1989, Linda developed and launched the *Millennium Conference* series for the decade of the 90s. With co-sponsors including The World Bank, the World Health Organization, The Carter Center and major universities including Johns Hopkins, the University of Glasgow, Tulane and Columbia, this series engaged the public and private sectors in decision-making conferences dedicated to identifying multi-sector actions to help children in desperate situations to survive and ultimately to thrive.

The plight of children living in poverty is not unique to the developing world, and communication and lessons learned do not go in one direction. Therefore, in 1990, when the head of the U.S. National Commission to Prevent Infant Mortality met with Linda and asked that INMED put its experience to work in the U.S., the answer was immediate and positive. Based on its experience in training community health workers in developing countries, INMED developed a set of training and reference materials for the fledgling lay home visiting movement in the U.S. With the materials being used in all 50 states and in trainings of AmeriCorps volunteers and outreach workers in many states, INMED Partnerships for Children established and has been implementing programs for children on the ground in inner-city Los Angeles and rural/suburban Virginia since 1994.

Now, celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it is a determination to prevent the loss of children and youth at any point along their path to adulthood—whether through disease, neglect or lack of education or opportunity—and to prepare them to build a brighter future for themselves and the next generation that guides our work today and inspires the way forward.