

**PRESS RELEASE ON BEHALF OF INANI START WELL FOUNDATION:
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

‘Nutrient-rich meals, partnership with feeding schemes can save vulnerable SA children’

CAPE TOWN. – Due to socio-economic circumstances, vulnerable children in South Africa don’t have enough access to growth nutrients during their critical formative years. Without access to growth nutrients, permanent growth impairments or childhood stunting occur.

Children who do not achieve growth markers at certain age intervals or cognitively and physically impaired for life. This has serious implications on their future economic and health fortunes. A total of 27 % of South Africa’s children won’t reach their full potential due to childhood stunting.

With their nutrient-dense, non-profit produced cereals, the INANI Start Well Foundation aims to address the stunting tragedy amongst children in South Africa, said Org van der Wath, executive director of INANI.

Van der Wath says a constructive relationship between INANI and the major feeding schemes in the country might also be essential to address stunting.

“Parents of vulnerable children can only afford staple foods which contains very few animal fats and protein, which carry crucial growth nutrients,” Van der Wath remarked.

He added that feeding schemes in the country do wonderful work. Between government and private feeding schemes they feed more than nine million children daily. They strive to address hunger and provide nutrients to children in poor communities. Limited budgets don’t always allow them to address the high demand for nutrient-rich food. They must rely on the same cheap and available staple foods as those used by vulnerable communities.

Some feeding schemes use meals fortified with soya to increase the protein content. Most food scientists’ question whether soya can contribute to poor kids’ chronic shortage of essential growth-nutrients.

Most feeding scheme-managers are focussed on addressing hunger. They don’t assess whether children reach the right weight or length for age. They also don’t check whether children have received the right combination of nutrients especially the essential macro nutrients like protein and fats.

Stunting can only be addressed by ensuring that small growing children do actually received quality growth nutrients regularly. INANI aims to partner with feeding schemes to deliver daily nutrient-dense meals to their children.

As part of a pilot program for the past eighteen months, INANI has operated in association with Tutela in Gauteng and InteliGro in Ceres to provide daily nutritious meals to 1500 pre-school children.

The project is ready for scaling to supply nutrient-dense meals at pioneering low prices to the feeding scheme market.

The Noakes Foundation has agreed to provide scientific assistance to the project. The Stellenbosch medical school has also offered INANI advice about a comprehensive study regarding the growth outcomes of the Startwell-cereal for children from vulnerable communities.

The Startwell-cereal contains 15 raw ingredients, including four wholegrains, two legumes and four dried dairy products.

INANI currently utilizes the services of a local food processor to manufacture the cereals according to recipe and quality standards. To deliver meals in the region of R2.00 per 50 g cereal, INANI requires an own processing plant.

With the non-profit plant, INANI can produce 200 ton per month feeding at least 200 000 children a daily nutrient-dense meal.

“To set up the plant will cost R11 million. We have already received more than R7 million of this. Our strategy is to commission more plants in South Africa to provide nutrient-rich meals for the two million vulnerable children,” Van der Wath explained. According to the Global Nutrition Report, stunting in Africa has increased over the past two decades. In South Africa about 300 000 children born every year will become stunted.

“Stunting in South Africa is higher than what one would expect from the country in Africa with the highest food-security on the continent. It is higher than countries like Gabon, Ghana and Senegal’s percentage of stunting,” Van der Wath warned.

“We must address it at all cost. It already has an adverse effect on social and economic development in South Africa,” Van der Wath said.

Media release compiled by Fanie Heyns on behalf of INANI Start Well Foundation. For more information, contact Org van der Wath on 079-5140067 or Leonie Venter on 076-8356430 or visit www.inaniswf.org