

MEDIA RELEASE ON BEHALF OF INANI STARTWELL FOUNDATION: 13th AUGUST 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Inani's first whole food plants in SA to address stunting which impacts 1.7 million.

The INANI Start Well Foundation has launched a fundraising campaign in order to build the first ever non-profit, whole food factory in South Africa. The sole purpose of this initiative is to manufacture nutrient-dense morning meals at pioneering low costs for children from poverty-stricken communities to address stunting in South Africa.

Stunting affects a child's ability to learn, develop and ultimately grow into their full potential.

More than 27 % of South African children under the age of five – or 1.7 million children - are stunted, mainly due to nutritional deficiencies in their diets. Every year, about 350 000 children are added to the stunted pool of children in South Africa.

“Many children in South Africa suffer from silent hunger – they have access to food but not nutrients. Their tummies are filled, but their bodies cannot grow to their full potential due to nutrient-poor food intake,” says Org van der Wath, executive director of the INANI Start Well Foundation.

Van der Wath quoted Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank, who said that the greatest contributor to economic growth is not physical infrastructure, but brainpower: What he refers to as grey matter infrastructure.

Stunted children today lead to stunted economies tomorrow. Let's end the scourge of malnutrition. It is well within our reach to do so, and the evidence is overwhelming that we must act – and act now, Adesina said according to Van der Wath.

Malnutrition – the cause of half of child deaths worldwide – continues to rob generations of Africans of the chance to grow to their full physical and cognitive potential, hugely impacting not only health outcomes, but also economic development in Africa.

Malnutrition is unacceptably high on the African continent, with 58 million or 36% of children under the age of five chronically undernourished – suffering from stunting, according to the African Development Bank.

Now INANI has created a solution to childhood stunting and malnutrition in South Africa.

The organisation is appealing to the public to help them raise funds via GivenGain as their biggest hurdle is securing funding for purchasing the non-profit, whole food processing plant.

“Due to the low profit margins, traditional financing institutions are not interested in assisting us with loan funding. We have already secured 65% of the required capital but require another R3 million to build the plant. We need your assistance to make our dream a reality,” says Van der Wath.

INANI Start Well Foundation is a non-profit organisation established to improve the quality of instant cereals served to children through feeding scheme institutions.

Scientists ask for very specific growth nutrients to be present in daily meals during every child's critical growth phases, said Van der Wath.

Essential proteins and fats are biochemistry's building blocks for growth and energy. Every society needs to make sure that its growing babies, infants and small children have daily access to these vitally important growth nutrients.

"As a society, we cannot continue to serve sugar-rich, nutrient-poor cereals to small children who grow up in poor communities," says Van der Wath.

"Through our not-for-profit processing business structure, we shift the processor's focus from profits for shareholders to nutritional content. We thereby vastly improve the quality of ready-to-eat meals offered to economically disadvantaged children," says Van der Wath.

Inani's plant will be using twin-screw extrusion technology which will enable the usage of various whole grains and legumes in the meals to include sufficient proteins and fats, which will ensure that childhood stunting is nutritionally addressed. It is also essential that animal sourced proteins and fats are made available to the growing children through these meals. Various dried dairy products – like protein, while milk and buttermilk products – are added to the meals.

The meals are also further fortified with very specific micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) to ensure these deficiencies are addressed.

The ultimate aim of the INANI board is to commission at least ten whole food, non-profit plants in order to eliminate the stunting rates across South Africa.

INANI will manufacture nutrient-dense instant cereals, sell it to the feeding scheme market with no profit intent, and advocate for better quality cereals served to poor growing children.

To contribute to the INANI Start Well Foundation, you can visit:

<https://www.givengain.com/cc/inanistartwellfoundation/> For more information, visit www.inaniswf.org.

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