

HEALTH AND NUTRITION ISSUE

Hunger and Food Insecurity in South Africa - Children suffer the most.

Addressing food insecurity in South Africa requires a multi-faceted approach involving various stakeholders. The neglected reality is that young children bear the brunt and child malnutrition is often the forgotten consequence of inaction.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic hit in 2019, the proportion of South Africans affected by moderate to severe food insecurity was already 17,3% and those affected by severe food insecurity was 7,0%. This is according to the Measuring Food Security in South Africa: Applying the Food Insecurity Experience Scale 2019. These numbers drastically increased during 2020 at the height of COVID-19. According to the same report based on data collected in 2020; 23,6% of South Africans were affected by moderate to severe food insecurity, while 14,9% experienced severe food insecurity. The knock-on effects will be felt for years to come should we ignore these reports.

In this month's thought leadership article, we discuss how various factors including Covid-19, the country's dire economic situation, loadshedding, and a lack of dietary diversity all contribute to the hunger and food insecurity crisis in South Africa.

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DO MORE adds its voice at the 2023 Nutrition Congress.

DO MORE FOUNDATION participated in the 2023 Nutrition Congress that was co-hosted by Nutrition Society of South Africa (NSSA) and Association for Dietetics in South Africa (ADSA). The Congress was held at the Lord Charles Hotel in Somerset-West, Western Cape, from 18 to 20 April.

The theme for this year's Congress was Synergy and Re-connection in a Diverse Nutrition World, which highlighted the need for economic, social, and environmental factors to be considered when it comes to solutions for Africa's nutrition challenges.

DO MORE FOUNDATION's National Lead, Dr Jessica Ronaasen, together with Project Lead at the University of Western Cape, Chantell Witten (PhD Nutrition), proudly represented the Foundation when they facilitated a poster presentation on our flagship programme EAT LOVE PLAY TALK.

The poster shared evidence and insights gained during the Foundation's 2022 pilot on particularly community based ECD practitioner's readiness to share nutrition messages around responsive caregiving, pregnancy, exclusive breastfeeding, and complementary feeding. Some key learnings shared at the congress included the significant level of confidence the facilitators in the community had to share nutrition messages as the messages were simple and relevant to their communities. By investing in design and graphics, the pilot materials were reported to be less intimidating and useful when engaging parents. Exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months, complementary feeding, affordable proteins, fruits and vegetables were a few of the themes which parents playfully explored with the pilot programme hosted locally in community based ECD centres.

Participating in this year's nutrition congresses provided a platform for academic input from nutrition experts and colleagues in the field of nutrition.



FNB ECD: Doing More for Young Children Suffering from Malnutrition.

Our partnership with FNB ECD has resulted in positive changes for young children across the country. FNB ECD is an organisation that was founded in 2017 by one of South Africa's leading financial institutions, First National Bank. It aims to provide urgent support and facilities to ECD centres nationally.

The organisation runs various programmes which include FNB employees adopting an ECD centre and providing the necessary assistance it needs. This could be assistance with registering the ECD centre with the Department of Basic Education or planting a vegetable garden. Through its employee volunteer programme and funding, FNB ECD also provides food donations to families with children whose health has been compromised by poverty.

In 2022, the Department of Health (DOH) in uPhongolo reported that there were children dying because of malnutrition. In SA, 27% of children under 5 years of age are stunted according to the 2020 South African Child Gauge. This condition derails children's ability to grow and develop cognitively as they should. This is due to various factors, one mainly being malnutrition.

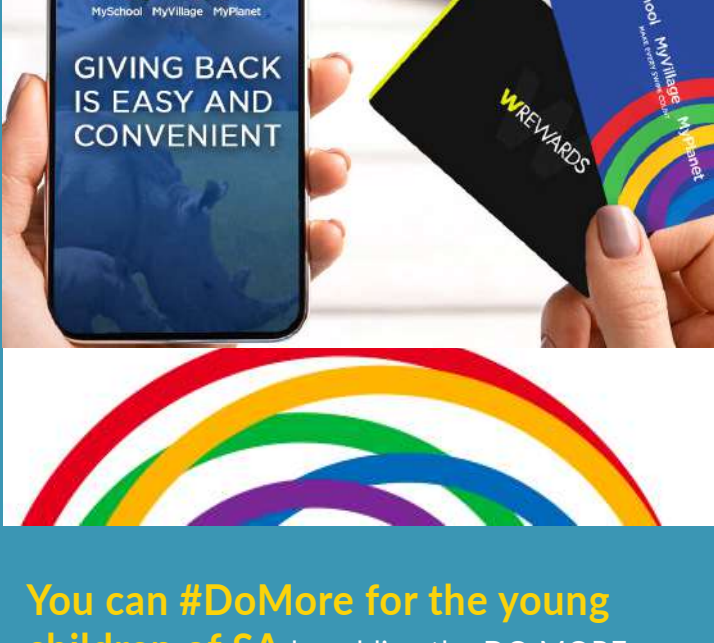
FNB ECD in partnership with DO MORE FOUNDATION, DOH, and Lulamaphiko, responded to this sad news by launching a Malnutrition Initiative in uPhongolo. The DOH identified 75 families with children most at risk and the Malnutrition Initiative was to help them. For six months, this partnership distributed nutritious food hampers to the families. A dietician recommended the foods included in the hamper to help the children recover. The DOH continuously monitored the children to ensure that their health improved.

The food hampers included the nutritious DO MORE Porridge (specifically formulated to meet the nutritional needs of young children). During the six-month period of the initiative, DO MORE FOUNDATION distributed 2,2 tons of porridge.

Through our ongoing partnership with FNB ECD, together we are contributing to the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)'s of Allleviating Hunger (SDG1), Good Health and wellbeing (SDG3), and Collaborative Partnerships (SDG17). Johannita McLeod, CEO FNB ECD, said: "The partnership with DO MORE FOUNDATION is an excellent example of how partnerships can work to make positive systemic and societal changes in impoverished communities in South Africa."



Simple ways you can #DoMore this month



Together, we can make a BIG difference through small actions. You can provide a meal to a child for as little as R1. Do a little more today to fight malnutrition. Contribute via Zapper, SnapScan, Card payment, or PayPal.

You can #DoMore for the young children of SA by adding the DO MORE FOUNDATION as a MySchool beneficiary in a few simple steps. The more you swipe, the more you give back!

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