



headstart
kids

Making a real difference.

Global Giving Proposal

2025



About Headstart Kids



Background

Headstart Kids Founder and Director Lily Geerdt is a Mother with a passion for good nutrition and wellbeing. From her personal experiences, she noticed the reality we are facing in South Africa around malnourishment – particularly during the early childhood development (the first 5 years), which is concerning and requires intervention.

Her vision and mission in life is to provide solutions that will overturn malnourishment in the form of iron deficiency and growth stunting. She has a passion to see children’s abilities to function improved optimally especially in the classroom. When children are given the opportunity to grow optimally this can only impact positively on the growth of the economy of our country.

Headstart Kids is a non-profit organisation based in South Africa, serving children from low-income communities. We are registered as a section 18a company that receives its funding from various sectors. This enables the organisation in fulfilling its commitment and provide solutions that aim to address the effects of malnourishment in children 6 months to 5 years old.

Headstart Kids was established in **2012** and kicked off in 2016 with a pilot project on Micronutrient Powders (MNP) intervention in Gauteng. Starting with 1000 children, Headstart Kids has now grown to include 40 000 children every day in South Africa. Our vision is to reach ONE Million children across Africa.



How do we do this?

We partner with the Public sector, the Private sector; NGOs; Community Based Organisations (CBO), Early Childhood Development Centres, Pre-Primary Schools, Special Needs Schools, Child-Care Centres (Orphanages), Day Care Centres, Private Clinics, Feeding Programmes and Home Support Initiatives, through the THRIVE FOR FIVE PROGRAMME



What is Malnutrition?

Malnutrition is also known as “Hidden Hunger”

The ‘hidden hunger’ due to micronutrient deficiency does not produce hunger as we know it. You might not feel it in the belly, but it strikes at the core of your health and vitality (this can also be known as belly full, body hungry).

Malnutrition is devastating – It systematically destroys a child – their cognitive development, their immune system, their body as well as their muscle growth and makes them more vulnerable to disease and death.

Causes of Malnourishment

Factors that contribute to micronutrient deficiencies include:

- ❖ Poor diet and poor knowledge of the importance of dietary diversity
- ❖ Poor-quality complementary feeding limited in energy and micronutrients, suboptimal breastfeeding, and an inadequate diet of the preschool child
- ❖ Increased micronutrient needs during certain life stages, such as pregnancy and lactation
- ❖ Health problems such as diseases, infections, or parasites

Annually in South Africa, micronutrient deficiencies are responsible for about **1,1 million of the 3,1 million child deaths that occur as result of undernutrition.** 48 % of hospital deaths are associated with moderate or severe acute malnutrition.”



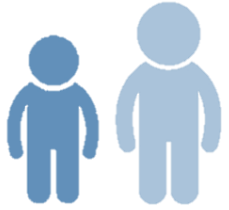
Visible Signs of Malnourishment

- △ **Stunting**
- △ **Wasting**
- △ **Underweight**
- △ **Overweight/ obese**

Stunting

When a child is too short for age.

Stunting affects a child's linear growth, may also have a poorer immune system, brain function, and organ development. Performing below average in these areas may also limit their future productivity and threaten the health of their own children.



Wasting

When a child has low weight for height.

Children with wasting are too thin and their immune systems are weak, leaving them vulnerable to developmental delays, disease and death.



Underweight

When a child's weight is too low to be considered for good health. Underweight causes a decrease in immune function, decreased muscle strength and hypothermia (when the body cannot control temperature well).



Overweight

Also known as Obesity is a condition where a child has a high weight for age and height.

It's particularly troubling because the extra pounds often start children on the path to health problems that were once considered adult problems – diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Some children also may experience teasing, bullying, depression link, or low self-esteem.





What are the recommendations

- ❖ Pursuing a holistic approach to addressing malnutrition in all its forms is necessary through programming, governance structures, funding streams and policies
- ❖ Creating platforms for shared actions where we can hold discussions, share information and mentor one another in the pursuit of eradication malnutrition
- ❖ Raise awareness in our communities, promote initiatives that address nutritional diversity such as food gardens, feeding programmes, home care interventions
- ❖ Actively address food choices daily- the co-existence of both under nutrition, obesity and other diet related health conditions are all embedded in early life nutrition

Making a real difference!

Together we can be empowered
to Fight childhood malnutrition
by:



**Raising Awareness of
Childhood Malnutrition**



**Addressing the Critical Need
for better Nutrition**



**Everyone Can Help, both young
and old**



**Together we can make a long
lasting difference**



Creating sustainable impact...



\$95 per child



Impacting **461** children

- Onboarding: Contract & Training (Scanning & Print)
- Food solution - 200 days
- MNP powder - 200 days
- Deworming x 2 (Every 6 months)
- Baseline, Midline & Endline report (Every 4 months)



Work focused on improving lives of the vulnerable in developing areas around SA

We address malnutrition from multiple fronts to maximise our impact



Support optimal absorption of nutrients

Deworming



Provide bi-annual doses of deworming medication

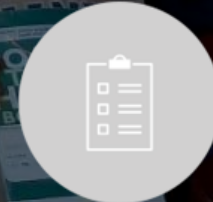
Provide Micronutrients

Directly through 1g Micronutrient powder sachets mixed in a **food solution**



Monitor effectiveness of interventions

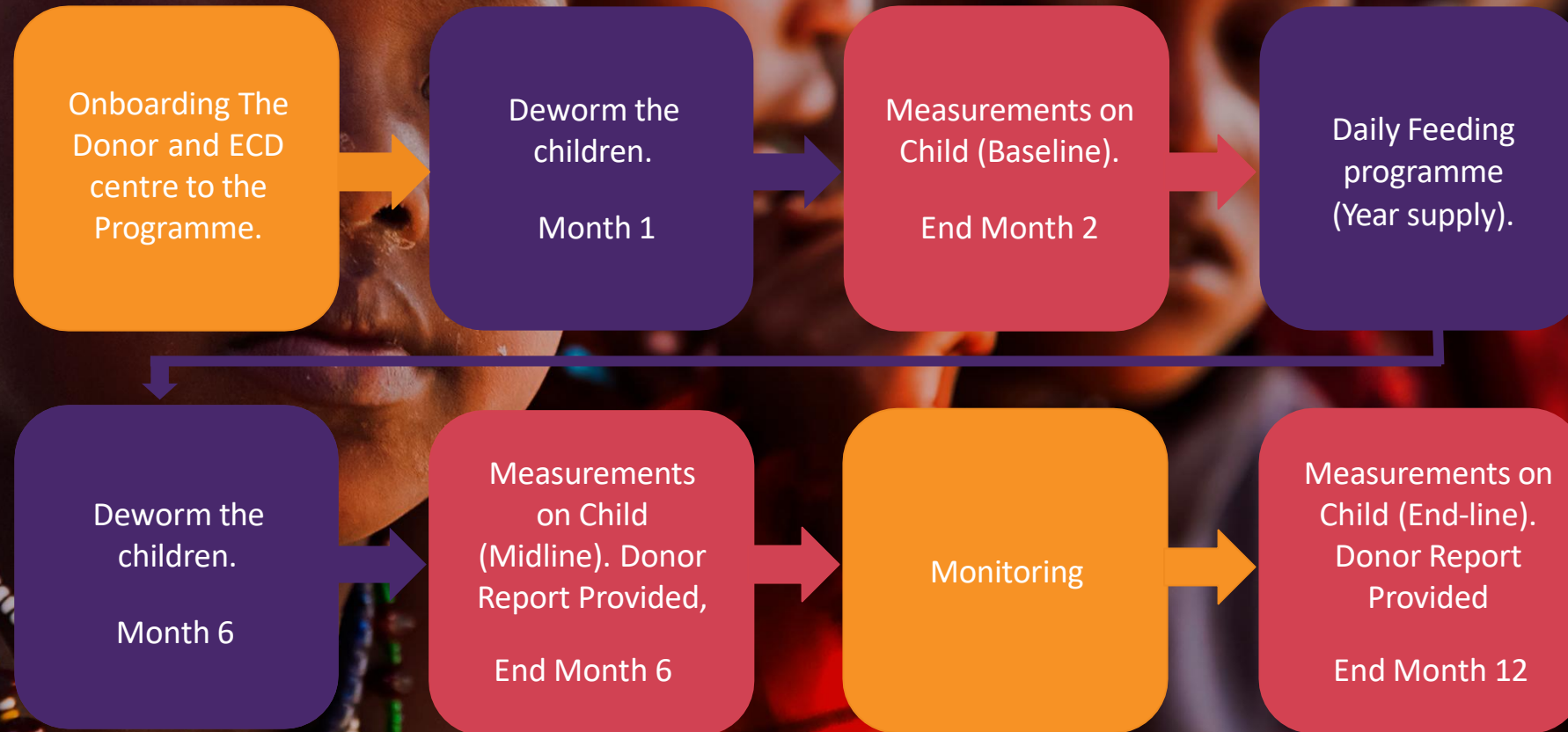
Measuring



Conduct weight, height and MUAC to measure impact of interventions



Our Approach





OUR SUCCESS: MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

In a cohort of 617 pre-school children, wasting was reduced by 46% within the first 3 months of programme implementation. After 8 months on the programme, stunting was reduced by 35% and underweight by 71%.

	Baseline, n (%)	First follow-up visit, n (%)	Second follow-up visit, n (%)
Stunting	119 (19)	107 (17)	77 (12)
Underweight	49 (8)	22 (4)	14 (2)
Wasting	28 (5)	15 (2)	15 (2)

Stunting 35%



Underweight 71%

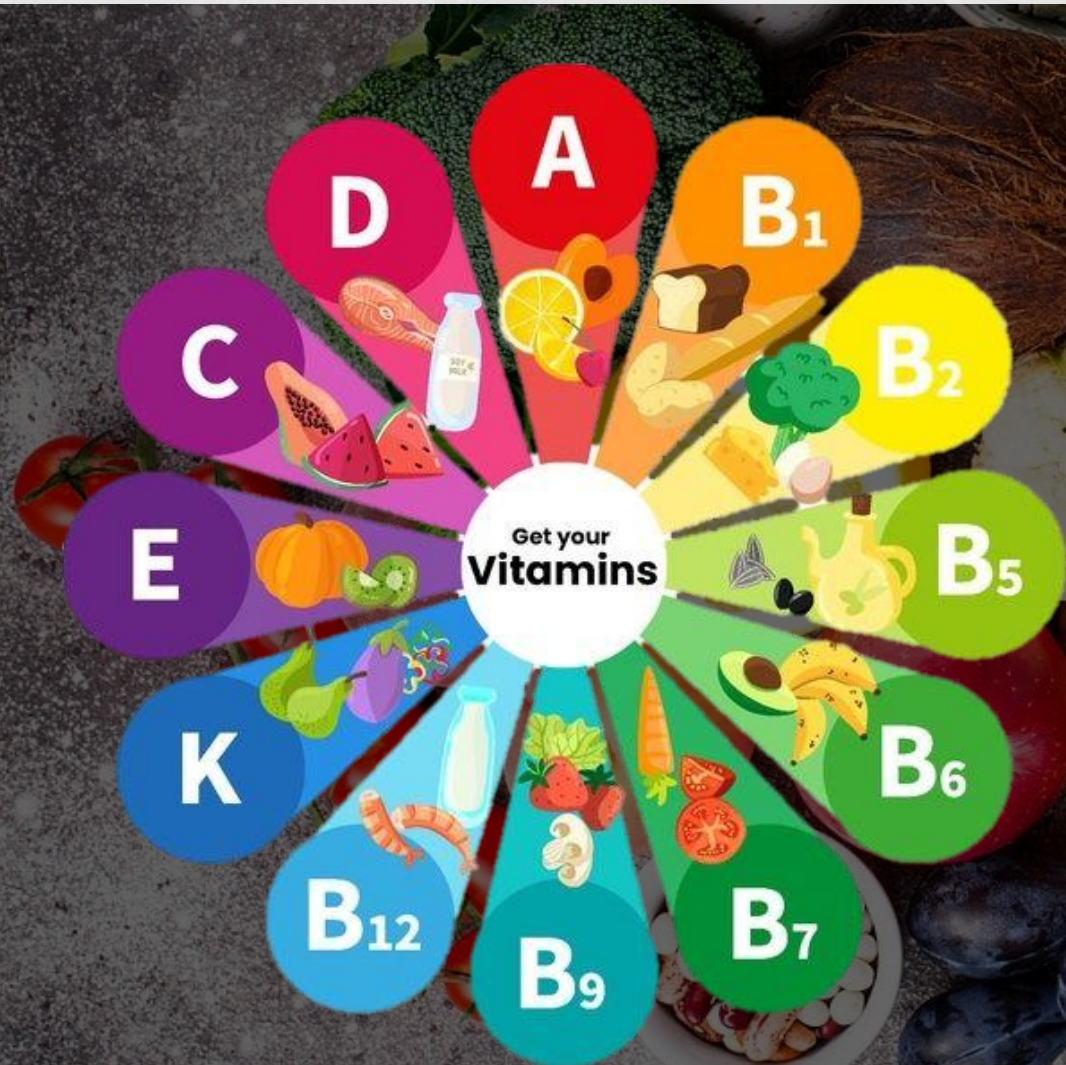


Wasting 46%



Micronutrients (Vitamins)

Essential for Children – 6 months to 5 years old



Vitamins:

Vitamin A
Vitamin D
Vitamin E
Vitamin B1, B2, B3, B6,
B9 B12
Vitamin C

Minerals:

Iron
Zinc
Copper
Selenium
Iodine

*Good nutrition provides **good fuel** for the body.*

Why Micronutrient Powders?



Micronutrients, often referred to as vitamins and minerals, are vital for healthy development, disease prevention, and wellbeing.

The needs must be obtained from the foods we eat since the body cannot make them.

Benefits:

- ❖ Reduces Anaemia and the effects thereof
- ❖ Promotes normal growth and development.
- ❖ Reduces the risk of poor health and diseases
- ❖ Improves overall health conditions.



- ✓ The micronutrient powder product is formulated according to WHO and UNICEF recommended micronutrient formulas.
- ✓ MNP sachets are distributed worldwide by agencies, governments and non - governmental and provides children with 15 essential vitamins and minerals.
- ✓ The MNP is packaged in a 1g foil sachet, making it easy to mix in ready to eat food, providing the maximum recommended daily intake per child.





MNP 1g Sachet

Young children have a higher demand for micronutrients, therefore the MNPs are recommended for infants and young children aged 6–23 months to improve iron status and reduce anemia.



1 Child + 1 Sachet = One day





Why Deworming?

Overview

Intestinal worms, also known as soil-transmitted helminths, are parasites that live in the human intestines or veins around the bladder. They are transmitted through eggs in human feces or urine, contaminating soil and water in areas with poor sanitation.

Impact on Health

These worms cause significant health issues, particularly in children, including:

- Nutritional Deficits: Worm infections lead to malnutrition, stunted growth, and anemia by disrupting nutrient absorption.
- Cognitive and Emotional Effects: Infected children may experience fatigue, learning difficulties, and behavioral problems like anxiety and depression due to iron deficiency anemia.





WHO Recommendations

The World Health Organization (WHO) advocates for large-scale deworming programs in areas where these infestations are common.

Treatment

A simple, periodic deworming regimen, typically administered twice a year, can significantly reduce the prevalence of these parasites, improving children's ability to absorb nutrients, grow, and develop properly.



Before – 3 June 2024

After 5 weeks – 9 July 2024

5 Weeks of Micronutrients Give a Big Turn-around for Gopolang's Health

- Name: Gopolang
- DOB: 22 June 2020
- Gender: Male

Year Month child began consuming micronutrients
June 2024

	Weight	Height	MUAC
Baseline	12.92	95	14.5
Midline	14.89	97.3	15



Thank you
Working together to build
a functional generation

Making a real difference.

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free to watch our Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAuMRSUeXao&t=31s>