

## **Africa's largest food retailer works to prevent childhood stunting**

The Shoprite Group has announced investment in several specific interventions to prevent childhood stunting which leaves one in four South African children under the age of five with lifelong cognitive, educational and employment challenges.

The core of this investment is in programmes helping to improve nutrition and food security. During its 2019 financial year, the Group provided 307 051 nutritious meals to early childhood development centres. In addition, it trained 172 early childhood practitioners and equipped them with educational resources, benefiting 4 415 children in 9 provinces.

It also recently partnered with Grow Great to include on-pack messaging on its Shoprite Ritebrand and Usave Ubrand packaging for 18s and 30s eggs, as they are a relatively affordable source of protein and great for a baby's growth from the age of six months.

"The impacts of stunting are widespread," explains Kopano Mabaso, executive director for the Grow Great Campaign which is working towards achieving zero stunting in South Africa by 2030. "It affects brain development and as such stunted children are, on average, less likely to finish school, have lower earning potential and are more likely to live in poverty as adults."

As the first 1 000 days of a child's life is a critical opportunity to establish a foundation for children's academic success, health and general well-being, the Shoprite Group will continue its fight against food insecurity and stunting, a scourge that has been called "the silent emergency".

Further interventions by the Group include critical infrastructure upgrades of kitchens and sanitation facilities at early development centres to provide a safe and healthy environment as well as assisting practitioners to register for and access an early childhood development subsidy.

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