

# FOOD VULNERABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA



*Before COVID-19, many South African households were already burdened with high levels of malnutrition. But then the pandemic came. Lockdown restrictions left many families without income, some without access to social relief support, increasing the number of people not receiving safe, sufficient and nutritious food.*

According to the National Income Dynamics Study-Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the lockdown and the resultant economic recession has increased child hunger by almost double, undoing the hard fought for gains we've made over the last decade. National surveys estimate that a quarter of pregnant women report going hungry and 25% of households live below the food poverty line. As if that is not enough, 2.5 million young children live in households that can't cover their basic nutritional needs, increasing malnutrition and risks of childhood stunting.

*"Child hunger is once again at the same level as it was during the harshest period of lockdown in South Africa, before the new grants and top-ups had been put into place."<sup>1</sup>*

## SOUTH AFRICA NEEDS ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE NUTRITIOUS FOOD NOW!

Child hunger and resulting malnutrition is a national emergency. Already, a quarter of South Africa's children under five suffer from stunting,<sup>2</sup> a condition that arises from prolonged undernutrition in the early years of life, affecting their physical and brain development, especially during pregnancy and the first two years of life. Stunted children are more likely to drop out of school, struggle with unemployment and live in poverty as adults.

But the cost of food continues to rise. A basic basket of nutritious food items in 2022 will cost over 20% more than it did pre-COVID.<sup>3</sup> Poor households are paying more for less, deepening the country's hunger crisis and placing millions of children at risk for malnutrition and stunting.

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Access to nutritious affordable food requires stakeholders across the food system to collaborate in reducing the cost of staple foods. Nutritious food items such as eggs, beans, tinned fish, fortified maize meal, peanut butter, amasi, soya and full-cream milk powder are high in nutritional value, but need to be made more affordable. **Government, food producers, wholesalers and retailers** should stand in solidarity with South African families to solve the malnutrition crisis and improve national food security. Our country and our children cannot wait!

1. Van de Berg et al., *Food insecurity in South Africa: Evidence from NIDS-CRAM Wave 5, 2021*  
2. DHS Survey, 2016  
3. Grow Great calculations, 2021

**GROW  
GREAT**



*powdered full  
cream milk*



*rice*



*dried beans and lentils*



*peanut butter*

# KEEP YOUR FAMILY HEALTHY!



*eggs*



*tinned fish*

*Ten nutritious food items that  
help your child Grow Great!*



*fortified  
maize meal*



*soya mince*

*4-in-1  
soup mix*



*amasi*

