

Our concept explained in detail:



The Heights and Minds Foundation aims to deliver nutritional advice in a modern, efficient and fun way through the so-called MindUps, to reduce and prevent chronic malnutrition among young children.

Why focus on Malnutrition?

Worldwide, over 40 million children under 2 years of age are chronically malnourished. Children who are malnourished and who suffer from frequent infections at a young age are at high risk of growth faltering. This means they are not growing well physically and the development of their brains may be affected negatively; **impaired brain development**. The chances for a healthy and productive life are slim if a child has suffered from malnutrition in its early years.

A healthy well-nourished child is born with 100 billion braincells. Furthermore, during the first years of life, 799 neurons are created every second. It is safe to say: chronic malnutrition can seriously inhibit neuron connections and brain development.

Chronic malnutrition is a condition resulting from low birth weight (being born too small due to undernutrition in pregnancy), inadequate and poor-quality food consumption, including lack of exclusive breastfeeding during the first 6 months of life, growing up in an unhealthy environment; suffering from frequent infections during the first years of life - all of which can be improved at low cost.

Prevention of chronic malnutrition can be achieved by : promoting a healthy pregnancy; exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months; providing a high-quality and adequate diet during the first 1000 days - pregnancy, lactation and the early years to 24 months -; encouraging a clean, smoke-free and stimulating environment to grow up in.

Chronic malnutrition is a condition that is not easily recognized. Parents need to be alert to the physical progress of their children and aware of faltering. An effective way to start addressing chronic malnutrition and child growth and

development is by making progress visible through measurements and subsequent counselling. This will be available at the MindUp.

The MindUp upgrades existing services and activities managed by local associations and organizations and integrates in an existing structure situated in a peri-urban area. The MindUp is managed by at least two trained managers (MUMs – **MindUp** Managers) who are affiliated experienced members of the local association. Depending on population density it covers a population of about 10,000 to 20,000 people or about 2 to 4,000 families. Of these families, an estimated 20 percent are so-called family 1,000 households (those with a pregnant woman and or child(ren) under 2 years of age. The catchment area for a MindUp is to serve those 1,000 families.

The **MindUp** will become a member of the social franchise under Heights and Minds. The Heights and Minds Foundation works in Partnership with the National Authorities to ensure broad-based support and sustainability. For example, in Senegal, the *Committee de Lutte contre la Malnutrition* (CLM) is the national partner established under a jointly agreed Partnership Protocol which outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability. The CLM is the National Nutrition Program under the Office of the Secretary General of the President of Senegal.

The **MindUp** management and maintenance of equipment and infrastructure is the responsibility of the local partner association or NGO. The Heights and Minds Foundation enters into a contract with a local NGO to upgrade existing structures to integrate the MindUp services. All required equipment and interior for the **MindUp** will be provided by Heights and Minds as starting capital and becomes the property of the local NGO after 2 years. Oversight, quality control and certification of the training of MUMs is ensured through the Heights and Minds Partnerships with the National Nutrition Authorities.

Each **MindUp** will be fully equipped to provide child growth promotion services, including cooking demonstrations, a child play corner, and on-line learning within a friendly and stimulating environment. The main clientele of the MindUp are pregnant women and parents of children in the first 1,000 days of life, who will have VIP status, but the entire community is welcome to visit.

The following services will be provided:

- child growth promotion services (measuring weight and height and counselling on progress)
- meeting point for beneficiaries and community at large
- the latest information on nutrition, healthy child growth and child development
- on-line access to information
- cooking demonstrations, with particular attention to the diet for the first 1,000 days period of life
- play corner for young children, including books and so-called early stimulation toys

In order to obtain independent financial income and become financially sustainable, the **MindUp** will serve snacks and drinks on-site during opening hours for a fee (cost recovery, including operating costs) and sell locally produced nutritious snacks and drinks. It is expected that the sales will gradually (within 3 years) cover the running cost of the **MindUp**.

The Heights and Minds Foundation funds a small-scale qualitative consumption study during the set up to identify nutrient gaps and to locate products in the area to fill these gaps, as well as to promote and sell such products at the **MindUp**. The MindUp will always collaborate with local vendors in the proximity.

The Heights and Minds Foundation has started its first two **MindUps** in Dakar Senegal, in partnership with the national nutrition program the CLM and the local associations Diam Ak Khewal of Hann Bel Air and Guoy Gui of Jaxaay in Rufisque. The Wolof term for **MindUp** is **Tawfekh** which literally means a place of well-being and learning. The first two **MindUps** serve as a learning ground for Heights and Minds and the Senegalese national partner the CLM, who are seeking a peri-urban model to address chronic malnutrition in Senegal's growing urban areas.