



**PRESS RELEASE**

**First results of feeding programme of innovative “Virtuous Circle” landmark project in South Africa show impressive impact**

*Teachers welcome “immense impact” on attendance and concentration in the classroom*

03 February 2017 Durban, South Africa: The landmark “Virtuous Circle” project on nutrition, food waste, packaging and the circular economy in South Africa has reached a key milestone this month with the first results of its feeding programme becoming available. As part of this programme, which will be completed by the end of March 2017, almost one million FUTURELIFE® Smart Food™ pouches will have been distributed to 27 primary and combined primary schools, seven pre-primary schools and one orphanage.

The project, coordinated by DuPont in close collaboration with Futurelife®, EqualTrade4, Amcor, Wildlands, RWPA and Wastebuster among others, uses a circular economy approach through the combination of smart food designed to meet the needs of children in isolated communities and smart packaging to keep the food fresh for as long as possible. The packaging from the food pouches is then recycled and converted into school desks. The project also entails an educational pillar, which educates children and teachers on the importance of sustainable waste management.

*“The nutritious instant meals are delivered in so called dual compartment pouches, which contain water on the one side and a dry solution on the other. Squeezing the pouch bursts the internal seal, allowing the content to be mixed and the meal to be ready for consumption. The nutritious value of the food is maintained through the entire process. This type of meal is ideal for use in situations where the food cannot be refrigerated or where there is little time, space or equipment to prepare nutritious meals.”* explains Julika Falconer, Director of the Futurelife® Foundation Trust.

To understand the impact of the feeding programme on the ground and to adapt it as needed, surveys of teachers from participating schools were carried out. In addition to the practical benefits in the preparation of food for teachers, the FUTURELIFE® Smart Food™ itself proved popular among the school children and their families. The pouches require no preparation time and do not take away any time from the academic curriculum. It also had a demonstrable impact on attendance levels and concentration in the class room.

228 teachers from 18 schools were consulted during the survey who provided first-hand insights into the impact of the feeding programme:

- 99% said that the pouches save time compared to standard school meals
- 95% found the pouches easy to use
- 93% of teachers reported that children liked the taste of the meal
- 86% of children didn’t find it difficult to finish the entire meal

A number of key learnings from the feeding programme of relevance to other schools, other countries or other areas have also been identified. These include the benefits of easy to store packaging, the importance of robust collection schemes and the potential to use the dual compartment pouches for use in other settings, such as in humanitarian aid initiative. As an example of this, during the course of the project, some of the pouches were provided to an NGO helping rural communities suffering from food insecurity in Malawi to shift to more efficient forms of agricultural production. It also underlines the critical need to ensure schoolchildren benefit from an early morning meal. In South Africa, this would involve the extension of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) to cover at least 50% of daily nutritional needs.

Craig Gibbs from the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), a valuable partner of the project which gave access to its local network of the district and school officials says *“The challenge remains that the NSNP ensures only one meal a day for school children and after a long and arduous journey to school, children need sufficient food to focus on learning. The Virtuous Circle feeding programme is an important addition to the NSNP scheme and the most significant outcome of the project is that children receive not only one meal, but two.”*

*“The difference that has been made by this programme to our school is immense. We are teaching learners coming from poor families who come to school hungry. Learners now get to eat breakfast here. We don’t have late comers and poor attendance issues anymore and enrolment seems to have improved. We hope that in the future this initiative will be extended to other schools. They need this type of programme to ensure their learners are able to concentrate in the classroom, because without food, they cannot concentrate”* says Head-teacher Khumalo, Aldinville Primary School, Kwa-Zulu-Natal, South Africa.

*“Nutritious school meal programmes provide a long-term investment in children’s development that can provide strong economic, social and educational returns. On top of having wide-reaching effects across a child’s life, evidence shows that feeding a child at school can be an essential tool for the development and growth of communities and economies. Delivering effective education and sustainable health helps to ensure children become productive workers and citizens in democracy. When developing countries start feeding children at school, they shape the future of their own countries.”* Arienne Mitchell, Executive Director, Global Child Nutrition Forum (GCNF).

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#### Notes to the editor:

#### About the project

The three pillars of the Virtuous Circle project, launched in October 2016, are:

- feeding undernourished school children in disadvantaged areas thanks to innovative packaging solutions (the “feeding pillar”)
- upcycling the waste packaging into school materials (the “recycling pillar”), and
- educating the students about the importance of sustainability and equipping local partners with the tools to maintain a true circular economy approach to nutrition (the “education pillar”)

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Check out the website <http://thevirtuouscircle.co.za> and follow us on Twitter @3PillarsZA

**Amcor Limited** (ASX: AMC; [www.amcor.com](http://www.amcor.com)) is a global leader in responsible packaging solutions, focusing on a broad range of flexible and rigid plastic packaging that enhances the products consumers use in everyday life, with 95 percent of its sales into the food, beverage, healthcare and tobacco industries. The company employs more than 31,000 people worldwide, operating in 40-plus countries and across more than 190 sites. <https://www.amcor.com/home/>

**DuPont** (NYSE: DD) has been bringing world-class science and engineering to the global marketplace in the form of innovative products, materials, and services since 1802. The company believes that by collaborating with customers, governments, NGOs, and thought leaders we can help find solutions to such global challenges as providing enough healthy food for people everywhere, decreasing dependence on fossil fuels, and protecting life and the environment. For additional information about DuPont and its commitment to inclusive innovation, please visit <http://dupont.com>.

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**Equaltrade 4 (Pty) Limited** is a supply chain management company founded in 1995 and deals with the supply and logistics of food and related products to the mining industries in Sub Saharan Africa. Situated in the mining towns of Rustenburg and Carletonville in South Africa the company is well placed to service these industries. The twin pouch concept was developed as a mid-shift meal supplement for this industry but its application has broadened to the support of communities in distress. The unique middle seal allows for the nutritional powder and purified water to remain separate increasing the shelf life of the product to 6 months – by squeezing the pouch the seal is broken allowing for powder and water to combine into a nutritious meal. <http://www.equaltrade4.co.za/>

**FUTURELIFE®** is a functional food company with a mission to improve the health and well-being of everyone by helping them to make the right nutritional choices in their daily lives. FUTURELIFE® is South Africa's first and only scientifically formulated, balanced, nutrient dense food to contain Moducare®. Most FUTURELIFE® products are also high in Energy, Protein and Dietary Fibre, and contain Calcium, Iron, Selenium, Zinc, essential vitamins and minerals, 19 Amino Acids and Omega 3+6. <http://futurelife.co.za/>

The **FUTURELIFE® Foundation Trust** was established as a nonprofit to enhance broad-based community development, particularly for the benefit of children at non fee-paying schools, vulnerable groups in society, and to support projects that promote sustainable livelihoods in areas where such non-fee-paying schools exist. <http://www.futurelifefoundation.co.za/>

**RWPA Solutions (Pty) Ltd**, an advisory consultancy and manufacturer founded in 2012, has devoted its efforts to poverty alleviation in South Africa through initiatives in the recycling, clean energy and affordable housing environments. RWPA is set up to develop: sustainable solutions for difficult to recycle rural and household multilayer and commingled plastic film waste, alternative cooking, heating and lighting solutions to reduce hazardous indoor smoke pollution specifically within informal settlements and innovative, green and low-cost housing solutions. RWPA works in conjunction with local and international conservation and development organisations towards achieving these unique solutions.

**Wildlands** is a charitable Non-Government Organisation and one of South Africa's leading environmental non-profits ([www.wildlands.co.za](http://www.wildlands.co.za)), working to improve the livelihood of South Africa's poorest communities and restoring the ecosystems that support them. The current project footprint includes over 80 poor urban and rural communities in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Gauteng. Wildlands' work is focused around 7 core programmes, which contribute significantly to our growing footprint; Trees for Life, Greening your Future, Recycling for Life, Clothes for Life, Ubuntu Earth, Khuthaza Business and Conservation SPACE. <http://wildlands.co.za/>

**Wastebuster** is a not for profit Community Interest Company (CIC) that delivers a school's education programme designed to foster positive values, attitudes and behaviours that prevent waste and encourage children to carry the messages from curriculum, to campus and into the community. Wastebuster specialise in environmental education, waste reduction and recycling campaigns and initiatives that engage, inform, and empower children to play a direct and active role in shaping their own future. Wastebuster also develop teacher and volunteer training programs to show how changes in the way we learn, live, play, work, and travel can help us live happy and healthy lives - within the resources available to us. Almost all Wastebuster's work involves partnerships and collaborations. We team up with not-for-profit agencies, NGOs and charities and form relationships with local councils, regional government offices and waste and utility companies. We also work with businesses that would like to activate positive change as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility commitment: <http://wastebuster.co.uk>