

SA Express joins global effort to eradicate hunger for Mandela Day

South African Express Airways commemorated this year's International Mandela Day by joining in a global initiative called 'International Mandela Day 2016: Stop Hunger Now Worldwide "Follow the Sun" Meal Packaging Event' - a global movement to eradicate hunger.



SA Express CEO Inati Ntshanga explained the motivation of the airline's staff to participate, as being inspired by the plight of almost three million South African schoolchildren who go to school hungry each day. According to Statistics SA, 16% of South Africans have inadequate access to food. "Our team felt they could do no less than Graça Machel, Chief Patron of Stop Hunger Now Southern Africa, who just the week before joined hundreds of volunteers in packing meal packs to feed the hungry. We are proud to emulate our beloved statesman's widow in giving 67 minutes towards Mandela Day, as over 40 of our staff similarly rolled up their sleeves and got involved."

Ntshanga said after the event, "This was a particularly exciting initiative which literally spanned the globe and involved countless people of all nationalities. With the focus as always on combatting the worldwide scourge of poverty and malnutrition, we partnered with Stop Hunger Now Southern Africa, an NPO that focuses on food distribution in Southern Africa."

It's in our hands now

The involvement of SA Express staff in Corporate Social Investment activities is a critical element in enabling the business, employees and communities to work together towards joint socio-economic interests.

The 40 plus SA Express employees were bussed to Carnival City last week to do their bit for a global effort that was expected to result in 10 million meals packaged. The meals will be delivered to charities in a series of events across the entire circumference of the globe, chasing the sunrise from East to West.

First to get busy was Stop Hunger Now Malaysia and ending in the West with Stop Hunger Now US. “However, for us, the centerpiece was Stop Hunger Now Southern Africa. In recognition of our special relationship with Nelson Mandela, South Africa ambitiously set itself a target of packing two million meals during the day, out of the global target of ten million,” said Ntshanga.

To meet its daunting target, Stop Hunger Now Southern Africa hosted events across no fewer than seven cities in South Africa: Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London, Nelspruit, and Pietermaritzburg. SA Express staff were joined by teams from a number of other large corporates each dedicating their now iconic 67 minutes to the Nelson Mandela cause of eradicating malnutrition and poverty. The parcels were then distributed to needy early development centers throughout the country.

Nelson Mandela International Day was launched in recognition of Nelson Mandela’s birthday on 18 July 2009 by unanimous decision of the UN General Assembly. It was inspired by a call Nelson Mandela made a year earlier, for the next generation to take on the burden of leadership in addressing the world’s social injustices when he said that “it is in your hands now”.

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