

# Lunchtime Comics Initiative

Sana Charania, Alisha Dua, Ngozi Okaru, Alexis Oni-Eseleh

## BUSINESS PLAN

**ABSTRACT:** "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family..." (The United Nations Art. 25). Lunchtime Comics is a health literacy tool that focuses on improving the dining experience for children while also resolving a bioethical problem: health disparities. Access to proper servings of fruits and vegetables, in addition to regular exercise, is a privilege. Access to education should not be. Health as a basic human right can only be realized if each and every individual has the tools, knowledge, and opportunities necessary to make informed health decisions. Even though the scientific community has already long established nutrition guidelines necessary for achieving the best health outcomes, the World Health Organization calls obesity one of "the most serious global health challenges of the 21st century," with the Centers for Disease Control estimating that globally 9% of preschoolers will be obese by the year 2020 (WHO, CDC). Clearly, children and adults alike don't have the proper tools to make effective and smart decisions about their health. Possessing tools to improve health literacy and failing to implement them in one of the most vulnerable populations would be ethically unsound. To improve health literacy and promote nutritious habits in young children, we created Lunchtime Comics, a series of placemats with fun, yet informative activities for the elementary school lunchroom. The placemats are character driven and interactive, yet educational at their core. Lunchtime Comics has been highly successful when tested with hundreds of students at Brent Elementary School and Thomas Elementary School, and has received support from health and nutrition professors. It is our overarching goal to create a well-developed product to pitch to the Let's Move Campaign, the School Nutrition Association and/or Action for Healthy Kids, for broader deployment of the placemats.

**FACULTY MENTOR:** Allyson Anderson