

Nampak helps schoolgirls with personal hygiene products

Thousands of South African schoolgirls are not going to class because they cannot afford sanitary towels.

According to research, 60% of women in South Africa do not have access to traditional sanitary ware (pads and tampons). And as an "alternative" to pads and tampons, they have no option but to use rags, toilet paper, newspaper, leaves, "recycled" tampons / pads and disposable nappies.

The average girl living in a community affected by poverty will miss a week of school each month due to lack of sanitary ware, this equates to 20% of the school year.

SABC's senior Specialist reporter Mahlatse Gallens recently investigated this at a high school in Soweto. Gallens spoke to 18-year-old Lerato - an orphan. "Like other young girls her family struggles to put food on the table and sanitary pads become a luxury she can only dream of."

Following this story, Nampak Lifestyle chose to join in the SABC sanitary towels campaign for the month of August as one of their women's month projects. They are donating 100 packs of sanitary towels to the school in Soweto.

"We have donated enough sanitary pads to supply ten girls with enough product to last them for a year," says Nampak's marketing director Farah Hukamdad, "But. We'd like to ask the public to assist us by donating more."

"These girls are using unhygienic methods because they have no other option, and we want to do what we can to help," she says.

"Those who wish to help can drop off packs of at all of SABC's regional offices. The broadcaster will then distribute them to school's in the area," says Gallens.

This is not the company's only programme. About six months ago, Nampak Lifestyle embarked upon a campaign to visit and educate new mothers in hospitals regarding the use of Lifestyle pads after giving birth. This is in keeping with the brand's commitment to understanding the women it serves, ensuring that they have the requisite information to continue living a confident, comfortable and secure life, even directly after childbirth.

Immediately following the birth of a baby, a woman's blood loss will be slightly heavier than a normal period - though it shouldn't exceed a sanitary pad every 4 hours. The loss and blood flow will decrease over the next week, while the blood flow should stop after a week or so, light blood loss may last for around 6 weeks after the birth.

Says Hukamdad: "We have had some extremely constructive feedback from the mothers who we have visited, which we plan to use in ongoing product development to make Lifestyle pads even more user friendly. The programme has been a great success overall and we look forward to continuing to educate and assist young mothers, dispelling many of the myths associated with post childbirth hygiene care along the way."