

P&G's Always Keeping Girls in School programme makes an important intervention in the lives of South Africa's schoolgirls

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Procter & Gamble South Africa (P&G) is continuing with its efforts to make meaningful change in South African society, focusing on some of the country's most vulnerable citizens. Together with the Footprint Foundation, P&G marked Menstrual Hygiene Day with an event at Sekano-Ntoane Secondary School in Soweto, Johannesburg on Friday, 27 May. The event was focused on promoting menstrual hygiene education and awareness, and as part of the programme they donated sanitary towels to the learners. Some of the main actors from the popular Skeem Saam drama series were present in support of the initiative.



The initiative is part of P&G's Always Keeping Girls in School (AKGIS) and Always programmes, designed to prevent the gaps that occur in girls' education when they are forced to take an absence from school due to a lack of access to menstrual hygiene products. The programmes are educational and social initiatives that succeed in keeping girls in school for as long as possible, and over the long term, ensuring they remain within the education system until the completion of their matric year. AKGIS provides Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights Education (SRHR) coupled with Menstrual Hygiene Education presented by trained health professionals. The programme also includes career guidance and vision creation to help girls reach their full potential. P&G South Africa General Manager, Alicia Eggingtons, says, "P&G believes that nothing should get in the way of a girl's education, especially not her period. In South Africa today, one in 10 girls misses school because of her period. That's why P&G is actively addressing period-poverty, by donating Always sanitary products. "To date we have reached over 150,000 girls, donating over seven million pads in South Africa. On Friday, we will donate another 1,9 million sanitary pads."



Over the last three years, we have reached over 150,000 girls, donating over seven million pads in South Africa. This year, we will donate another 1,9 million sanitary pads.” “The school would like to thank P&G for the support they’ve given to our learners by providing them with sanitary towels and beneficial knowledge regarding menstrual education. Our girls are now able to attend school regularly because of the availability of the sanitary towels donated by the company. Thank you very much for your unending support,” says Pinky Maluleka, the deputy principal of Sekano Ntoane secondary school.

As we commemorate Youth Month, it is important to shed light on issues that the current youth are facing and acknowledging menstruation as a normal fact of life, is key to removing the “shame “associated with menstruation. This programme aims to remove the stigmatism, exclusion and discrimination millions of women and girls are subjected to around the world, simply because they menstruate. It believes it is unacceptable that women and girls continue to be prevented from getting an education, earning an income and fully and equally participating in everyday life because of a natural bodily function. It is hoped that this message will have travelled around the globe and be fully internalized by 2030.



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