

How Palesa Pads is helping SA's girls stay in school

 By [Sandy Peters](#)

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In 2017, after reading an article about girls in underprivileged communities missing school due to a lack of access to menstrual sanitaryware, Sherie "Palesa" de Wet set out to find a sustainable solution. Following six months of research and testing, she launched what is now Palesa Reusable Sanitary Pads.



To date, De Wet and her team at Palesa Pads, with the aid of corporate sponsorship, have helped over 40,000 girls access affordable, eco-friendly reusable sanitary pads so they don't have to miss a day of school while on their period.

During a recent symposium held by the South Africa Coalition on Menstrual Health Management, it was revealed that, based on a sample of extremely disadvantaged schools in South Africa:

- 50% of girls in Grades 6-8 missed on average 5.3 days of school per month;
- 26.1% of girls in Grades 9-12 missed on average two days of school per month; and
- 17.5% of tertiary students missed classes on average two days a month, due to menstruation.

Set on making a difference here in SA and further abroad, De Wet has big plans for the social enterprise - her vision for Palesa Pads is to be the "leader of the cloth pad revolution in Africa", with an expanding footprint on the continent in sponsorship, retail and manufacturing.



We chatted to De Wet to find out more about her journey as a social entrepreneur, some of the impact Palesa Pads has had thus far, and what about this particular issue struck a chord with her:

For more information on Palesa Pads, go to www.palesapads.com.

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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