

Kotex launches global She Can Initiative on 100th anniversary

Kotex, part of the Kimberly-Clark brand stable, is commemorating its 100th anniversary by committing to expand menstrual hygiene education and access through its global She Can Initiative.



"The global Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the strength of women around the world who are leading the response as doctors, nurses, scientists, engineers, farmers, public servants, volunteers and in many other essential roles. At the same time, the job loss resulting from the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women and has left more than 743 million girls in 185 countries out of school," Kimberly-Clark said in a statement.

In response, the personal care corporation and its Kotex brand are engaging consumers, communities and employees in a global effort to fight stigmas within society, ensure access to education, and open doors for women and girls to pursue their ambitions.

R43m investment

The Kotex She Can Initiative will focus its social impact of Kimberly-Clark's feminine care brands in four key areas:

- Address lack of access to menstrual hygiene products and education, through the Alliance for Period Supplies and other

efforts around the world;

- Partnership with Plan International to invest R43m (\$2.5m) over three years into menstrual hygiene solutions including basic sanitation and product access to help 1.4 million women to manage their periods with dignity;
- Supportive education and resources for girls, boys and teachers to destigmatise menstruation; and
- Investments and grants through efforts around the globe to open doors for women to pursue independent futures.

"The stigma attached to menstruation or simply the lack of access to products will keep millions of women and girls from pursuing dreams of becoming one of those heroes on the front lines," said Juanita Pelaez, Kimberly-Clark. "The Kotex She Can Initiative is a long-term effort to build a future where a period never gets in the way of any woman's progress."



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29 May 2020



Kimberly-Clark said its commitment to menstrual hygiene was born from insights of women working as war-time nurses more than 100 years ago, who stitched together hygiene pads made from Kimberly-Clark's cellucotton bandages so they could stay on the front lines during their period.

When the Kotex brand was introduced in 1920, the stigma attached to menstruation required it to be sold in a plain, unmarked box behind a pharmacy counter.

One hundred years later, the company says that together with its Kotex brand it remains focused on eliminating stigmas, improving access and improving key outcomes for women and girls in the areas of education and overall health and wellness.

"The days of South African women and girls feeling and being made to feel dirty or other are coming to an end. Anecdotal evidence suggests that lack of adequate sanitary wear might result in young girls, particularly of high school age, missing school while menstruating and one study found that adolescent girls in South Africa can miss up to five days of school per month due to menstruation," Kimberly-Clark said.

"Furthermore, the shame and privacy surrounding menstruation makes access to sanitary wear even more scarce and therefore increases the stigma around periods."

Menstrual Hygiene Day

Kimberly-Clark and Kotex are sponsors of Menstrual Hygiene Day, a global awareness programme launched by WASH United in 2014 to bring global attention to the lack of menstrual hygiene management access, education and sanitation affecting millions of women and girls.

“Days like Menstrual Hygiene Day are important because they provide the platform to engage openly around menstruation. Kotex She Can Initiative is committed to continue educating society as a whole that menstruation is a normal bodily function in a female body,” said Nthabiseng Leso, Kotex SA marketing manager.



#NewCampaign: "Periods are normal, showing them should be too"

Jessica Tennant 25 Feb 2019



Pelaez added that over the past five months, Kimberly-Clark has donated millions of Kotex products to Covid-19 response and relief efforts around the world.

“We know that we can do more to help her rebuild the future of our communities, and the Kotex She Can Initiative will provide sustained support for women and girls whose futures can be changed through access to period supplies, community education and an independent future.”

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