

Donation of menstrual cups alleviates period poverty for 1,000 girls

Issued by [Sumitomo Dunlop](#)

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More than 1,000 girl learners at two KwaZulu-Natal high schools now have a better chance of uninterrupted education and maximum school attendance after each receiving a donation of menstrual cups this month.



The donation earlier this month served to help address the challenge of vulnerable girls missing many days in the school year due to a lack of access to menstrual products and proper sanitation, as well as inadequate education around managing their menstrual cycle. Many women and girls also experience persistent taboos and stigma concerning their period.

Joanne de Freitas, CSI manager of Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (SRSA) says the organisation partnered with menstrual health and education NGO Elle International to donate menstrual cups to the schools.

Elle Cup is a Proudly South African innovation that can protect girls for up to 12 hours and is reusable for more than five years. The cost-effective device reduces the financial stress of buying sanitary products every month.

Bhekinthutuko High School received 595 Elle Cups for its female learners while Steadville High School received 555.

Teachers at the two Ladysmith District schools were also trained to support learners using the product and educate them about menstrual health.



They were given an interactive 90-minute training programme on de-stigmatising menstruation and how to use the donated products. The grade 8 to 12 girls will receive their training on returning to school in 2022.

De Freitas said SRSA hopes to provide the girls with the confidence that comes with access to menstrual health education and hygiene products that will have a positive impact on their education and improve their school attendance.

She said a lack of menstrual health and feminine hygiene products has a devastating impact on school-going young girls in rural and semi-rural communities.

“We believe menstrual health is not only a human right but also contributes to the overall health and education of the girl child. With the donation of these Elle Cups, we want to relieve them of this economic burden that comes with a lack of menstrual hygiene care. This puts undue pressure on female students and takes vulnerable girls away for many days in their school year. We want to be part of changing their narrative.”

SRSA CEO Lubin Ozoux, added, “Giving back to the community is an ongoing priority for us. Education is a key pillar of SRSA's corporate social investment strategy, which seeks to ensure that our business provides socio-economic benefits to employees, women, young people and the local community as a whole.”

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