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My name is Sherie Palesa de Wet. I am the founder and CEO of Palesa Pads.

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February of 2017, I read an article about

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girls who were missing school because they didn't have sanitary pads. And I was so horrified by that because that's something that had never happened to me. I'd never, ever gone a day without pads, so I didn't even know what the person would use if you didn't have pads.

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So I started researching that to try and understand what are these girls using because they're not going to school because they don't have suitable protection, but they're still bleeding even when they're at home. So what are they using?

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And that research was truly horrendous. Knowing that girls are using rags, socks, old mattresses, newspaper, toilet paper, all kinds of things. As an alternative to sanitary pads because they don't have,

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So these are the kinds of unhygienic alternatives that girls were being subjected to because they just couldn't afford pads. And there's so many problems with that

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And of course, the most important thing is that these girls are missing an opportunity to participate in the economy, go to school, learn and be equal to their male counterparts simply because they are bleeding, which is something which is completely natural, something they have no control over and honestly speaking, necessary for all human life.

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I wanted to get involved in that, and I wanted to be part of the solution.

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We were very pleased to be contacted by NTT DATA MEA.

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And, I was so excited to find out that they wanted to work with us to help keep girls in school.

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And the reason why we did this is because as an organization, we are passionate about education and making sure that all kids learners, irregardless of gender, are able to go to school. So we identified that 1 in 4 girls in MEA, missed school.

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And this is because of their periods and not being able to afford to buy Sanitary wear.

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Palesa Pads are washable, reusable sanitary pads.

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They have been made with a special sport fabric that is absorbent and quick drying so that you don't feel any moisture. They also have an absorbent core as well as a full waterproof layer to prevent any leaks.

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They come in four different sizes, and this particular one is the Essential Flow Kit,

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which NTT DATA MEA has sponsored the girls with. And this has 4 pads one of each size.

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So we have our pink pad, which is our Mini pad for light flow, our green one for medium flow, the Midi pad, we have our blue Maxi pad for heavy flow.

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And then we also have the black pad for nighttime use or for very heavy flow.

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By providing the girls with a sustainable solution to menstrual hygiene management.

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With our Palesa Pads kits, we can ensure that they never miss school again.

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So as an organization we've leveraged on our networks and collaborated with some of our employees, giving them an opportunity to partner with us through donations to be able to buy these pads.

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We've also collaborated with the Department of Education to help us identify some of the schools that are most disadvantaged who would benefit most in this initiative. We've also partnered with some of our clients who are also interested in just partnering with organizations that care about the humans behind each and every solution that we give them.

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With the current data that we've been able to collect, we have managed to decrease absenteeism in school by 30% with the girls that we've supported so far.

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This initiative will solve other issues in the future such as diversity, inclusion.

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It will ensure that the girls are included throughout their education, throughout the economy, and that they are not left behind,

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and also it will improve the quality of education, meaning that they will all get a plane level field to be able to fully focus on their education without worrying about their periods.

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Thank you so much for your support.

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We are really looking forward to the new year and expanding our territory and working with NTT DATA MEA to bring dignity to girls all over the Middle East and Africa, not just South Africa.

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