



## Ontex donates 6,000 sanitary napkins to schools in Ghent, Belgium In the battle against rising menstrual poverty

**Aalst-Erembodegem, May 4, 2022** - Ontex, an international provider of personal hygiene solutions, is donating 6,000 sanitary napkins to 29 schools and boarding schools of the non-profit association SKOG in Ghent, Belgium to combat rising menstrual poverty.

Menstrual and incontinence products should be part of the normal standard of living. Yet for many people, this is not the case today. In Belgium, there are also many families who cannot afford personal hygiene products. This is not only demonstrated by statistics from various public bodies and study services of poverty associations. Ontex, a producer of personal hygiene products, has noticed that the number of requests for donations of menstrual and incontinence products continues to rise. Partly due to the current inflation rate, more and more families end up in hygiene poverty. Similarly, several schools and poverty organizations are noticing that more and more school-aged girls are staying home because of this issue.

*"For the growing group of girls who do not have the opportunity to buy menstrual products at home, we find it important to provide a discreet supply from our schools and boarding schools. In this way, we want to ensure that all our students can learn in optimal conditions and remove any barriers",* said general director Wouter Boute of the Ghent school group SKOG.

The organizations Fourth World Group People for People Aalst and Center for General Welfarework (CAW) East Flanders also see a growing problem. *"More and more profiles, also from the lower middle class have to make a lot of effort to make ends meet,"* said Noël Callebaut, staff member for Fundraising at CAW East Flanders. *"Since the pandemic, I see the number of requests for basic hygiene products and menstrual poverty rising sharply."*

Nele Buyl, theme worker Education of the organization Fourth World Group People for People from Aalst adds: *"Young people in poverty are often ashamed that they live in poverty; you don't walk around with that. Saying that you don't have enough menstrual products because of financial difficulties is another taboo. We must avoid such taboos from further reinforcing the unequal educational opportunities of vulnerable students."*

As an internationally active company, Ontex had long been aware of the global problem of hygiene poverty. But until recently, the company was mainly confronted with the issue in the various emerging countries where it operates. The increase in the number of local requests from schools and organizations in the region surprised the company: *"We know about menstrual poverty through our donations to vulnerable groups in emerging countries such as Mexico, but the fact that we are now also receiving requests from schools in our own region has surprised me. Several local poverty organizations we work with confirm that the problem is growing and as a locally anchored company with deep roots in the region we obviously want to help",* said [Annick De Poorter](#), Executive Vice President for Innovation and Sustainability of Ontex.

To ensure that products donated worldwide benefit the most vulnerable groups in society, Ontex has also established a global [donation policy](#) with principles to increase transparency of donations. In this way, the company ensures that donated goods end up in the right place. *"We have already donated more than 6 million products to vulnerable groups worldwide in the past 2 years, including more than 1 million menstrual products. In addition to donations, we also make sure to bring innovations in tampons and pads to the market as soon as possible in a more affordable version. We are also adding circular products to our offering."*

Ontex donates millions of hygiene products around the world. For an overview, visit [ontex.com: https://ontex.com/sustainability/building-trust/ontex-donations-and-donation-policy/](https://ontex.com/sustainability/building-trust/ontex-donations-and-donation-policy/)

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## About Ontex

Ontex is a leading international provider of personal hygiene solutions, with expertise in baby care, feminine care and adult care. Ontex's innovative products are distributed in more than 110 countries through leading retailer brands, lifestyle brands and Ontex brands. Employing some 9,000 people all over the world, Ontex has a presence in 21 countries, with its headquarters in Aalst, Belgium. Ontex is listed on Euronext Brussels and is part of the Bel Mid®. To keep up with the latest news, visit [ontex.com](https://www.ontex.com) or follow Ontex on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

## About school group SKOG

The non-profit organization SKOG, School Group for Catholic Education in Ghent, Belgium, is the result of a merger of 6 school boards in Ghent. This school group offers ordinary and special education in 14 elementary school and 10 secondary schools in Ghent, including 5 boarding schools. The school group has approximately 8,500 pupils and more than 1,000 staff members.

## About Fourth World Group People for People

Fourth World Group People for People is an organization that gives a voice to the poor to fight for equal rights of people living in poverty and for an inclusive society. People living in poverty take the floor and share their experiences of injustice and exclusion. Fourth World Group People for People advocates for concrete changes that address the causes of poverty for all people - in Aalst, Flanders and Belgium.

For more information, visit [www.vierdewereldgroepaalst.be](http://www.vierdewereldgroepaalst.be)

## About CAW East Flanders

Center General Welfare Work (CAW) East Flanders is a pluralistic organization that provides expert assistance to anyone with questions or problems related to welfare. CAW East Flanders informs, guides and offers shelter if needed. Our target groups are people in vulnerable situations such as the homeless, victims of violence, young people, (ex-)prisoners, refugees, broken families, etc. Our assistance is professional, diverse, confidential and anonymous. Our organisation has 669 employees and every year around 25,000 people knock on the door of CAW East Flanders with a request for help. Follow CAW East Flanders on [www.caw.be](http://www.caw.be) and [www.facebook.com/cawoostvlaanderen](https://www.facebook.com/cawoostvlaanderen)