

We have our eye on **Elizabeth Scharpf**



The average woman spends about 2,000 days of her life menstruating. For most, a period is a minor inconvenience. But for women and girls in the developing world, it carries a larger risk. In the absence of affordable sanitary products, women use rags, bark and even mud — which can all lead to infection — or they simply stay home. The UN estimates a full 10 percent of Africa's female students skip school altogether when they're on their periods.

Harvard MBA Elizabeth Scharpf first heard of the problem while on a research trip in Mozambique. "I was shocked that something like this could pose such a problem," recalls the 32-year-old. "But from a geeky economist's point of view, I also thought that a seven-cent pad could potentially do more to grow the economy than a long report no one was going to read." So in 2007, Scharpf launched Sustainable Health Enterprises (SHE) to create locally made, eco-friendly pads for women in developing countries. In Rwanda, her team created a pad from banana-tree fibres that they plan to sell for 30 percent less than the cost of imported brands. She works with local women to make and market these pads, creating grassroots businesses that could help pull them out of poverty.

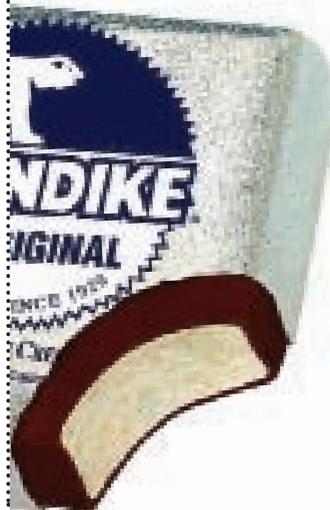
Already, Scharpf has won an award from the Global Fund For Children for tackling this topic. But her greatest reward comes from helping a new generation overcome the "taboo" of their cycles. "It's inspiring to see young Rwandan women lead efforts to lift themselves up." **by Elaine O'Connor**

THE STAT
HIV/AIDS KILLS MORE WOMEN WORLDWIDE AGED 15 TO 44 THAN ANY OTHER DISEASE.



NO THANK YOU, KLONDIKE BAR

What would we do for a Klondike bar? Not much, after visiting the ice-cream company's Man Cave website. On it, we found "The Adventures of Khaki Pants Pete," an interactive game that had us shaking our heads at the blatantly sexist behaviour of Pete, who wrestles scantily clad women, flirts with his children's babysitter and laments his suburban lot in life due in part to a finger-wagging wife. We're opting for an Oreo ice-cream sandwich instead.



THE DISCOVERY IS FAT THE NEW FLU?

by Stacy Lee Kong

It turns out obesity may be contagious. After studying more than 30 years of physical data on some 12,000 residents of Framingham, Mass., scientists found a curious pattern. If a person's friend became obese, he or she was nearly 60 percent more likely to follow suit. If a friend of a friend did, the resident was around 20 percent more likely to gain weight, and about 10 percent more likely if a friend of a friend of a friend packed on the pounds. But here's the caveat: The Framingham's folks aren't an especially diverse bunch, meaning the study doesn't consider other factors that affect obesity, such as education or income. So let's not laugh in the face of free will just yet.

from the World Health Organization