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17-year-old student bags prestigious Diana Award for creating reusable sanitary package that last for up to 3 years

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Ziyaan Virji. (courtesy)

- **Ziyaan Virji has been awarded The Diana Award for going above and beyond his everyday life to create and sustain positive change.**
- **In 2017, Ziyaan launched the Affordable and Accessible Sanitation for Women (AASW).**
- **AASW has been working in close collaboration with community partners Tunaweza Women with Disabilities, to produce and distribute sanitary packages that are washable cost effective, environmentally friendly and cost between \$3 to \$5.**

A 17-year-old student at the Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa, Kenya, has received one of the highest accolades for social action or humanitarian efforts.

Ziyaan Virji received 'The Diana Award' for going above and beyond his everyday life to create and sustain positive change.



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A 26-year-old South African cagefighter knocked his opponent out with a masterful front kick, then celebrated by pretending to shoot him in the face



Ziyaan Virji. (courtesy)

The Diana Award was established in 1999 and is given to inspirational young people from across the United Kingdom and around the world. The award was founded in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales and inspired by her belief that young people can change the world.

AD

Recipients of the award are judged across four criteria, namely Vision, Social impact, Youth-led service journey and Inspiring others. They must be aged between 9 to 25 and have been carry-

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ing out their activities for at least 12 months.

“I am truly honoured to be a recipient of this prestigious International Award and to be recognised for my work in the legacy of Princess Diana. I would like to thank my family, my close friends, my mentors, and most importantly, my school for their continuous support and guidance in helping me find and achieve my purpose: to help give girls access to menstrual hygiene around the world.” said Ziyaan upon receiving the award.



Diana Award Winner - Ziyaan Virji.

In 2017, whilst working on his 'Personal Project' – an in-depth research-based project – for his International Baccalaureate studies at the Academy, Ziyaan was surprised to learn that 500 million girls across the world do not have access to the necessary menstrual health resources they require.

To ensure the sustainability of this project beyond academics, he launched Affordable and Accessible Sanitation for Women (AASW). It is a voluntary youth initiative that is comprised of high school students between the ages of 13-18 and runs with support from staff at the Academy.

“The Academy has taught me a lot about the whole process of service, especially the idea of the service cycle and thinking sustainably when reaching out to communities. This knowledge guided me in creating my unique model of approach” said Ziyaan.



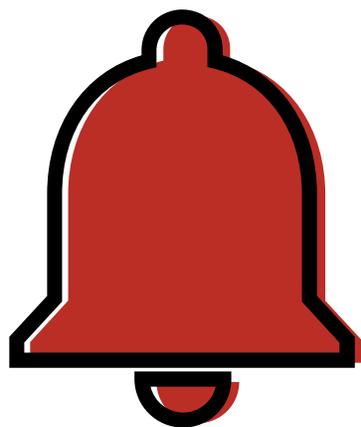
Diana Award Winner - Ziyaan Virji speaking at a past event.
(courtesy)

They work with local organizations to produce

and distribute reusable sanitary packages and equip girls with the necessary skills to give themselves and their communities access to menstrual hygiene.

AASW has been working in close collaboration with community partners Tunaweza Women with Disabilities, to produce and distribute sanitary packages that are reusable, cost effective, environmentally friendly, and embarrassment-free. These packages last for up to 3 years, are 100% biodegradable and cost between \$3 to \$5.

Additionally, the pads are made from colorful African fabric (leso/kitenge) with a removable



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In the longer term, AASW aims to create entrepreneurial opportunities to empower girls to take themselves out of the vicious poverty and help the rest of their community to access men-

strual hygiene.

Since its inception, AASW has helped almost 300 girls to acquire access to menstrual hygiene across six different countries, namely; Kenya, Tanzania, Pakistan, India, Nigeria and the UAE. Over the next 12 months, AASW aims to continue expanding to provide over 1,000 girls with access to sanitation. This reach is due to ongoing fundraising and events.

Author: george tubei Source: Pulse Live Kenya

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