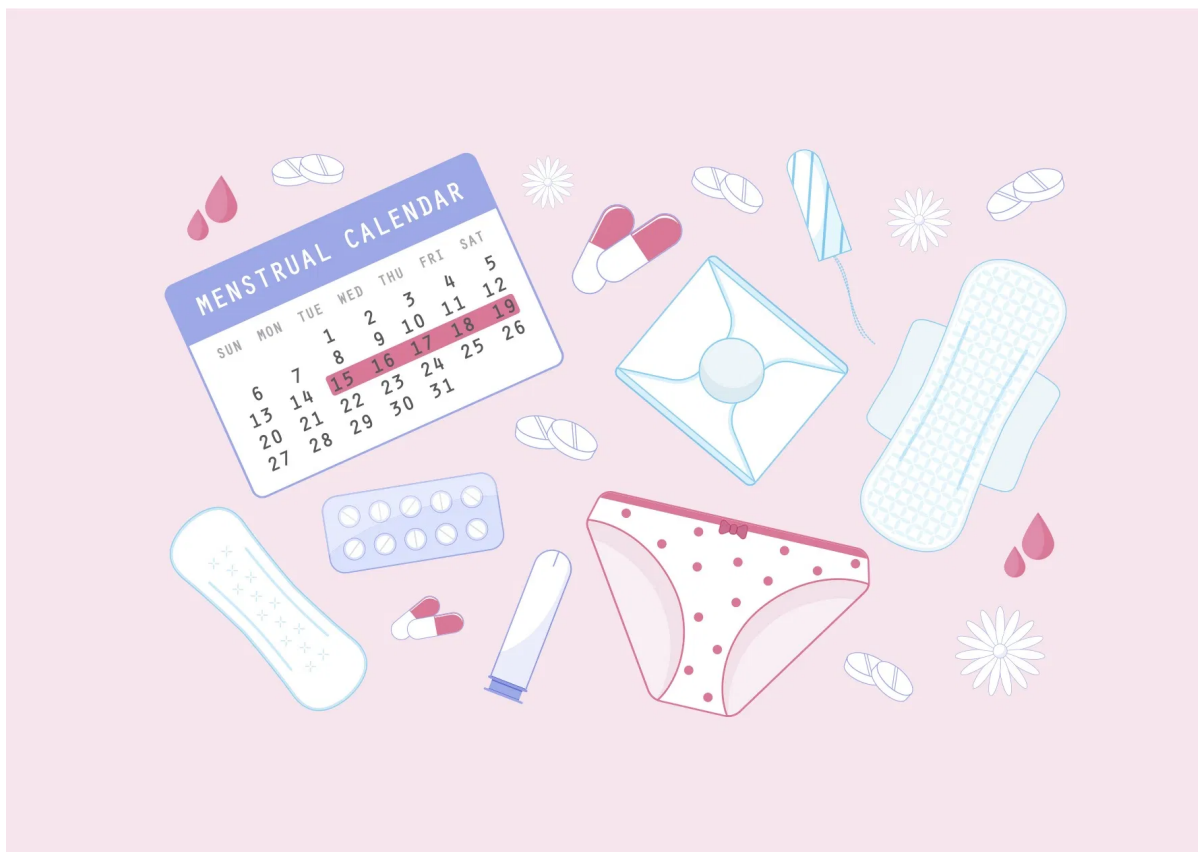


By Shivani Persad



At 17-years-old Ziyaan Virji didn't know much about menstruation or the reproductive cycle but that didn't stop him. He recalls watching a documentary called "[India's Menstruation Man](#)" by Al Jazeera, profiling Arunachalam Muruganantham, in which Muruganantham is a social entrepreneur who invents a machine that can create cost-effective

sanitary pads. As a result of his invention, 23 of India's 29 states have access to these affordable pads.

Virji's curiosity led him to speak to his mother about her experience, he then learned that growing up she too faced challenges in accessing proper menstrual hygiene as a young girl. This inspired Virji to dedicate a personal project, that he was assigned in 2017 at the Aga Khan Academy Mombasa, to solving these challenges for women like his mother on a global scale.

He launched [Accessible and Affordable Sanitation for Women](#) (AASW) with the goal of providing easy access to menstrual hygiene for menstruators around the world and removing the stigma around menstruation overall.

## [Read more: [The Period is Political and Religious: Discussions of Menstruation in India](#)]

To date, AASW has worked with more than 1,200 menstruators to provide access to menstrual hygiene in seven different countries. The organization has created a reusable period package that includes liners, wings, underwear, and anti-septic soap, that are all a hundred percent biodegradable and can last up to three years.

In collaboration with [Operation Period](#) and 20 other organizations, AASW has recognized May as International Period Month. Through their [#InternationalPeriodMonth](#) Campaign on social media, the coalition has given about 600 menstruators affected by COVID-19 access to reusable packages in Kenya and Tanzania.



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Along with [@wezeshabinti](#) and [@dtb\\_duo](#), we have helped vulnerable girls and women affected by the floods in the Budalang'i constituency get access to basic humanitarian needs. Twelve year old Sylvia Awino's rape on sixth may prompted [@wezeshabinti](#), [@dtb\\_duo](#) and us to go to her village and educate the girls there about consent, sexual assault and sexual abuse. Along with [@dtb\\_duo](#) we donated a total of 300 kits there. In collaboration with Tunaweza Women with Disabilities, we were able to distribute 600 washable masks to People with Disabilities in Bamburi Hodi Hodi Village, in Mvita and in Bombolulu in Mombasa, Kenya.

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#aasw #covid19 #pandemic #ngo #coronavirus #sexualabuse  
#metoo #passthepad #internationalperiodmonth #thosewhoblood  
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There are three parts to the campaign:

1. SHARE: Share posts from the [AASW Instagram](#) with the hashtag [#internationalperiodmonth](#) and [#passthepad](#).
2. CREATE: Throughout May, you can submit period-inspired art to AASW and the winners will be posted at the end of the month.
3. DONATE: AASW is raising funds to support 28,000 menstruators who are vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19. [Donate here](#).

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For more information about AASW and the work they do, follow them on [Instagram](#).

## Shivani Persad

Shivani Persad is a full-time model, writer and labour activist. Her interests include intersectional feminism, Indo-Caribbean diaspora and politics. In 2019 she started @liveshivmedia, a social justice driven storytelling platform, to tell the stories that aren't being told.

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