

## PERIODS DECENCY

# Menstrual health campaign wins Mombasa teen award

*Diana Award recognises his efforts to help girls struggling menstrual health*

### In Summary

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- His campaign is inspired by difficulties his mother had getting proper sanitary hygiene.
  - The sanitary towels go for Sh500-800, a price he terms affordable since the reusable pads can last for three years as compared to the non-reusable ones.
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by **PILI CHIMERAH**  
*Correspondent, Coast Region*

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*Ziyaan Virji*

*Image: COURTESY*

A 17-year-old student has won the Diana Award for helping girls get proper sanitation when in their menstrual cycle.

Ziyaan Virji launched a project known as Affordable and Accessible Sanitation for Women (AASW) in 2017. He worked with Tunaweza Women with Disabilities (a local organisation) to produce and distribute reusable sanitary towels in support of his school and other youth.

ADVERTISING



His mother had difficulties getting proper sanitary hygiene when she was young, and when Virji learned about it, it moved him to help other victims.



“I had a conversation with my mum which I think was a turning point because I found out that when she was small, she did not have proper access to menstrual hygiene,” he said.

“That pushed me to look into this issue and I found out that around 500 million girls in the world do not have access.”

Virji reached out to 22 girls in Tanzania and until now, he has extended his reach to 350 girls in Kenya, Tanzania, Pakistan, India, Nigeria and the UAE.

He aims to reach all these 500 million girls if possible. Virji is grateful to his school, The Aga Khan Academy Mombasa, for the support they have given him ever since he started the project.

The sanitary towels go for Sh500-800, a price he terms affordable since the reusable pads can last for three years as compared to the non-reusable ones.

“Together with Tunaweza, we produce and distribute sanitary pads that are reusable, cost-effective, environmentally friendly and embarrassment-free, and the packages are 100 per cent biodegradable,” he said.



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