

DP grads #DoMore for equity in education

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The graduating class of 2020 at the Aga Khan Academy Mombasa recognized the value of their Diploma Programme (DP) and wanted to give back to their community as they transitioned to a new chapter. With the #DoMore2020 initiative, these grads pledged to raise US\$50,000 in scholarship funds for African students pursuing an IB education.



By **Ziyaan Virji** [in](#)

The class of 2020 at the Aga Khan Academy Mombasa has teamed up to fundraise US\$50,000 in scholarship aid to make an IB education more accessible to students in Africa through the #DoMore2020 initiative. We connected with recent Aga Khan graduate Ziyaan Virji, who founded his non-profit Affordable and Accessible Sanitation for Women (AASW) for his Middle Years Program (MYP) personal project, to share more about this initiative.

Can you tell us about #DoMore2020? What global challenge

does the project help overcome for the scholarship recipients?

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#DoMore2020 is a collective initiative from the Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa, class of 2020. It aims to raise US\$50,000 for the annual scholarship fund that supports deserving students around Africa. Who may not be financially able to get access to an IB education. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, in 2018, one in five children between the ages of six through 17 are not in school. We believe that education is at the core of the IB and was meant for all, regardless of socio-economic background. Everyone should have access to this basic need. To create a world of peace, equity and unity, it is important that each child has access to quality education.

Can you tell us about your personal connection to this project?

My brother and I are both beneficiaries of the annual scholarship fund and had the opportunity to get access to an IB education at the academy. Studying at the academy has given me values, opportunities and educational ideas that have changed my life. When I got the opportunity to study at the academy, I knew it was a huge privilege, as not everyone in my community had this type of education. I understand that without the generosity and kindness of the people around me and the academy, I wouldn't be the Ziyaan Virji you know today: a young award-winning, change maker that has made massive impact doing what he loves.

Unfortunately, the system we have doesn't give everyone access to a quality education. There are over 72 million children around the world that remain unschooled and millions that don't have access to quality education. Four years ago, I would have been one of those children, and you would not have seen my voice and determination to be part of the solution.

As I came closer to graduating, I knew that having this education served a purpose greater than myself. At this point, I made a promise to myself to ensure that I will do whatever it takes to give others the same opportunity I received. That is when I had a conversation with my mentor and then shared this idea with the rest of my class. Since then, we have all come together and collectively put massive efforts to #DoMore2020 and make this a reality.

How have the values you developed during your time in the IB shaped the goals and vision for this project?

“Being IB students harnessed this desire within us through the courses, ethos and principles and cultivated an awareness of the world outside textbooks”

From the Primary Years Programme (PYP) to the Diploma Programme (DP), the IB has embedded some important values in our learning such as being caring, open-minded and balanced. This has been aligned with a sense of student agency through the PYP exhibition, MYP personal project and the DP creativity, activity, service (CAS) programme. This project stems from the embedded values that have shaped us over the years, with the focus on leadership and stewardship from the academy and the IB. Being IB students harnessed this desire within us through the courses, ethos and principles and cultivated an awareness of the world outside textbooks and academic obligations. We are now leaders that show empathy and compassion while striving to create harmony in our community and considering the needs of all community members. Through this project, we want to create a world of equity, a world of hope and a world that inspires young people to empower and uplift their communities.

How has COVID-19 (Coronavirus) heightened the importance of education in your community?

COVID-19 has shown us how life is so uncertain and how easily we can take things for granted. Unfortunately, those most vulnerable to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 are those that didn't necessarily have access to education; such as daily wagers. Moreover, COVID-19 has shown us the importance of diversifying your skill set, adapting to a new way of life and the importance of taking a holistic approach to education. The IB has that holistic approach that has made us resilient individuals. In an unprecedented time like this, the IB has allowed us to combat and work through this crisis and come out as better individuals.

In what ways has an IB education supported your career goals?

“My passion and interests in social justice stemmed from learning about global and local issues in the IB curriculum”

I am a social entrepreneur and I plan to pursue this as a career path for years to come. My journey in this space started through the personal project and further developed through the CAS programme in which I was able to start my own organization that has now served over 2500+ menstruates in seven countries around the world. Additionally, my passion and interests in social justice stemmed from learning about global and local issues in the IB curriculum as well as learning how to find sustainable solutions to solve them. It was through the learner profile attributes that my values of altruism and giving back to the community were developed. It was through the countless opportunities to take leadership be it during class discussions, projects or in my school that I was able to develop self-management and leadership skills.



What advice do you have for incoming DP students?

The DP experience is what you make of it. I would say these are two of the most crucial years in your journey. Always keep in mind what your end goal is and what you want to make out of your two years. Think big and don't be limited by what your school offers or what people around you are doing. Be consistent, results are not always going to come on your first try, second try, tenth try, but with patience and consistency, they will come. Take the extra mile—reach out for help, do your research, go out of your way to make things happen. Do more than you're expected to do. Don't do things because you want to fulfill school requirements, want things on your resume or for fame and recognition. Do things because you **want** to do them, and it is in line with your purpose. That should be the fuel that ignites you. You will realize that all of the things I mentioned above will come on their own. Be balanced and don't sign up for every opportunity that comes along. Think about your priorities, have a balance between your academics, social life, mental and physical health and your extracurricular activities. Surround yourself with people that understand your priorities and will help you achieve your goals. Have fun! These two years are where you will make tons of memories and create long-lasting friendships. Also remember, we are not only leaders of tomorrow but also leaders of today. If you have an idea, if you are passionate about something, if you want to create impact, **start now**. Don't wait for high school to finish or for the next summer break or when you, "grow up". We are the generation of **change**, and we have to create the world we want to live in.

Ziyaan Virji is a graduate of the Aga Khan Academy Mombasa and a social entrepreneur. He founded his first organization, Affordable and Accessible Sanitation for Women (AASW), while completing the Middle Years Program (MYP) personal project. Hear more about the initiative here.

To hear more from Diploma Programme (DP) graduates check out these IB programme stories. If you are an IB grad and want to share your story, write to us at alumni.relations@ibo.org. We appreciate your support in sharing IB stories and invite you to connect with us on LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube!

