

Evaluating Tanzania's national sanitation campaign, *Nyumba Ni Choo*

Around three quarters of Tanzanians lack access to improved sanitation facilities such as a household toilet. Despite several national campaigns to improve access in recent decades, the number of toilets and other sanitation facilities remains low, with serious health and financial consequences for the country.

CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS SANITATION

In response, the Tanzanian government launched a national behaviour change campaign in 2017. Over the course of four years, this campaign sought to encourage 2 million Tanzanians to construct improved toilets and practise handwashing with soap. Known as *Nyumba Ni Choo*, which roughly translates as 'a house is not complete without a proper toilet', the campaign used insights from behavioural science and mass communications to instil improved hygiene practices and attitudes in the population. The aim was to make toilets desirable in the public consciousness by associating them with modern, high-status households. The campaign also encouraged local government officials to make and uphold commitments to improve sanitation in their areas.

Nyumba Ni Choo produced considerable media content to promote this goal. This included national radio and television adverts and broadcasts, frequent social media posts and live events throughout the country. Content was refreshed with new slogans and messaging approximately twice a year to maintain public interest and engagement.

EVALUATING NYUMBA NI CHOO

Following the end of the campaign in 2021, the project team launched a process evaluation to assess the impact of *Nyumba Ni Choo*. The purpose of the evaluation was not only to investigate whether the campaign increased access to improved sanitation facilities, but to understand *how* it had achieved this.

The evaluation had two elements. The first was a nationwide SMS survey of people with improved toilets. A total of 4,537 people, ranging in age from 18 to 96 years old, answered 23 questions about themselves, their property and their sanitation facilities as part of the survey. The evaluation's second element saw the project team conduct



semi-structured interviews with 21 household heads and 40 officials at various levels of government responsible for sanitation-related activities to identify the major motivations to improve toilets. The project team also collected data on the time spent by government officials to promote sanitation and the money spent by households to construct improved toilets.

A WIDELY RECOGNISED CAMPAIGN

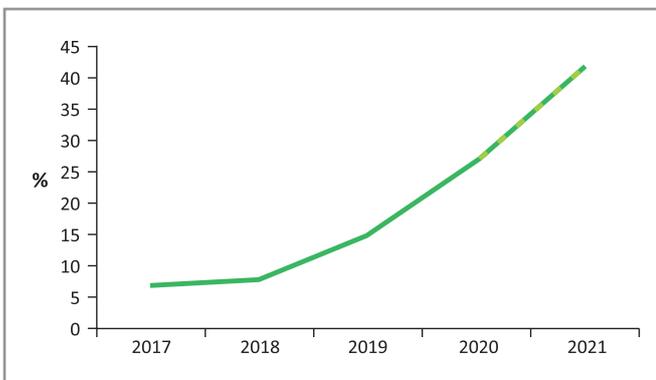
Of the thousands who responded to the SMS survey, 97% reported having heard of *Nyumba Ni Choo*. The most effective communication channels were radio and television, which informed 39% and 30% of respondents about the campaign, respectively. Live events were attended by 36% of respondents who lived in wards where these events were held.

Nyumba Ni Choo was also well-known among government officials: 93% of those interviewed were familiar with the campaign, and 63% had personally attended at least one roadshow in their area. Many officials also heard about the campaign through radio and television, and 14% were exposed to campaign materials via social media.

POPULAR AND MEMORABLE MESSAGING

Reports gathered during the evaluation suggest that people liked the campaign and found its messages relevant, with several household heads reporting that it inspired them to build improved toilets. The most cited reason among SMS survey respondents for constructing a toilet was a desire to be modern, which suggests that *Nyumba Ni Choo* successfully promoted a new and motivational mindset towards sanitation, as intended. Following exposure to the campaign, a number of interviewees also displayed a greater understanding of the importance of sanitation, such as the link between improved hygiene and reduced disease prevalence in children. In some instances this knowledge also encouraged people to improve their sanitation facilities.

These sentiments are supported by quantitative data, which show a significant increase in the rate at which household sanitation facilities were improved since the inception of *Nyumba Ni Choo* in 2017. A separate analysis of government data also showed that wards that hosted live events now have significantly higher coverage of improved sanitation facilities compared to wards that did not host a campaign event.



The project evaluation shows that the rate at which households improved their sanitation facilities increased during the campaign. As the evaluation was carried out halfway through 2021, the dotted line is a projection assuming the same rate of change for the remainder of 2021.

Reactions to *Nyumba Ni Choo* among government officials were also positive, if slightly more mixed. Over 80% said that they liked the campaign, and 71% believed it was effective at motivating people to improve their sanitation. In the words of one district-level official: '*Nyumba Ni Choo* has been the only programme to motivate the community to have improved toilets.' However, a few officials disliked what they considered a top-down approach, which left them feeling excluded from campaign decision making. Others doubted whether *Nyumba Ni Choo* would lead to widespread change without increased funds for sanitation. This was echoed by several household heads, who cited a lack of money as a major obstacle to improving their toilets.

Despite these reservations, both government officials and household heads agreed that officials played an important role in getting people to improve their sanitation facilities. This finding supports the campaign's decision to target government officials as well as household heads.

INFORMING FUTURE CAMPAIGNS

The process evaluation has shown that *Nyumba Ni Choo* produced popular, memorable and motivating messaging that encouraged both household heads and government officials to push for greater access to improved sanitation facilities. By providing a comprehensive overview of the behavioural determinants of sanitation improvement, the evaluation also allows *Nyumba Ni Choo's* successes and lessons learned to inform future health and sanitation campaigns.



PROJECT
CLEAR

LONDON
SCHOOL OF
HYGIENE
& TROPICAL
MEDICINE



INNOVEX

You can find out more about the work done as part of this project at <https://nyumbanichoo.com/resources>

This material has been funded with UK aid from the UK government; however, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.