

Using direct consumer contact to maximise campaign reach and engagement

In countries with limited radio, television and internet penetration, how can public health campaigns reach as many people as possible? *Nyumba Ni Choo*, Tanzania's national sanitation campaign, shows how the innovative use of direct consumer contact (DCC) can help maximise reach and engagement.

DIRECT CONSUMER CONTACT

Hygiene and sanitation are longstanding concerns in Tanzania. Until recently, the majority of Tanzanians lacked access to improved latrines, and fewer than one fifth of households had handwashing facilities with soap and water. Determined to improve this situation, the Tanzanian government launched a five-year mass communications campaign in 2017 to encourage millions of Tanzanians to construct improved toilets and practise handwashing with soap. The campaign was named *Nyumba Ni Choo*, which roughly translates as 'a house is not complete without a proper toilet'.

Nyumba Ni Choo reached its audiences using television, radio, social media, display media and DCC. Unlike other channels, DCC allows campaigns to engage face-to-face with target audiences. This has the potential to boost public engagement with the campaign, especially among audiences that are difficult to reach by less direct channels. Opportunities for DCC include roadshows, performances, sports competitions and other events likely to attract a crowd.

To achieve *Nyumba Ni Choo's* ambitious aims, the campaign team employed a dynamic approach to planning and producing DCC events. Reflecting the campaign's ethos of adaptive programming, they revised and restyled public events to incorporate changing campaign priorities as well as new findings about campaign effectiveness. The results of this flexibility can be seen in the continued improvements made to DCC events over the campaign's five-year run.

INCREASING REACH AND ENGAGEMENT

When DCC events were first introduced to villages in Tanzania in 2018, local artists were hired to perform, but they were unable to draw large crowds. *Nyumba Ni Choo* therefore engaged Mrisho Mpoto, a well-known and



Mrisho Mpoto (centre) helped attract larger crowds to DCC events throughout Tanzania.

widely respected Tanzanian poet and singer, to front these events. His presence, together with his band of professional entertainers, helped attract much larger crowds. Mpoto was also able to encourage Regional and District Commissioners to attend DCC events and publicly commit to supporting campaign implementation and local coverage targets.

Other changes were made to increase attendance over the next two years. Larger DCC events were held at ward rather than village level, allowing people from multiple villages to attend simultaneously. To boost campaign awareness, ward-level events were accompanied by a wide range of branded materials, including T-shirts, notebooks and flash drives. Local radio stations were approached and many agreed to attend and broadcast events for free. Together with Mpoto's involvement, these measures succeeded in quadrupling the average number of attendees from 200 in 2018 to 800 by early 2019.

Visible political participation became an important element of these DCC events. Throughout 2018, this was achieved by asking local leaders to sign a document pledging their commitment to *Nyumba Ni Choo*. To heighten the spectacle and significance of this commitment, a flagpole ceremony was introduced to DCC events in 2019. This saw a flag raised to a height equivalent to the ward's level of sanitation coverage – a ward with 50% coverage, for example, would only raise its flag halfway up the pole. By providing a much more visible representation of local sanitation coverage, the ceremony better highlighted the importance of constructing improved toilets and the need for committed leadership to reach mutually agreed goals.

RESPONDING TO COVID-19

The campaign's flexible approach to DCC events proved essential in 2020, when the campaign team was asked by the Tanzanian government and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office to quickly repurpose the *Nyumba Ni Choo* brand to promote hygiene, social distancing and mask wearing as means of preventing COVID-19 transmission. In response, DCC events were changed to feature celebrities, politicians and community leaders publicly washing their hands to encourage spectators to adopt the practice.

In 2021, *Nyumba Ni Choo* partnered with the Tanzanian Football Federation to promote COVID-19-related behavioural measures using local football tournaments. Matches were held at district rather than ward level and attracted larger crowds than previous events, with some drawing in more than 5,000 people. New, football-related branded materials were produced, including jerseys, corner flags and footballs. To maximise campaign impact, teams were selected from wards with large populations and low sanitation coverage, and players and coaching staff served as effective *Nyumba Ni Choo* ambassadors.

Nyumba Ni Choo's willingness to adapt ensured that its DCC events remained relevant and engaging and thus an effective vehicle for public health messaging. By the time the campaign ended in 2021, DCC events had been successfully implemented in 21 of Tanzania's 26 regions, reaching 710,400 people. Importantly, a review of the campaign found that wards which participated in DCC events subsequently enjoyed a greater rate of toilet improvement than wards which did not participate. These achievements suggest that *Nyumba Ni Choo's* use of DCC events can serve as a model for future public health campaigns – not just in Tanzania, but around the world.



The flagpole ceremony effectively visualised local sanitation coverage and commitments to DCC event attendees.



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

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