

# *Nipo Tayari*: Kick-starting Tanzania's national sanitation campaign with political mobilisation

From 2017 to 2021, the Tanzanian government oversaw a national behaviour change campaign that successfully encouraged millions of Tanzanians to construct improved toilets and practise handwashing with soap. The secret to its success lay partly in an innovative programme of political engagement and mobilisation.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Known as *Nyumba Ni Choo*, which roughly translates as 'a house is not complete without a proper toilet', the campaign adopted a two-pronged approach to achieve its ambitious goals. It used insights from behavioural science and mass communications to instil improved hygiene practices and attitudes in the general population. Simultaneously, it encouraged politicians and government officials to make and uphold commitments to improve sanitation.

This political engagement was vital to ensure that public willingness to improve their sanitation facilities was matched by a political will to support such efforts. Not only did official government leadership boost *Nyumba Ni Choo*'s authority throughout Tanzania, but it compelled politicians and officials to ensure that increased public awareness and enthusiasm translated into effective action.



Development partners, government officials and politicians – including Tanzania's Minister of Health Ummy Mwalimu, pictured here – all posed with the *Nipo Tayari* frame to symbolise their commitment to the campaign.

## GETTING READY WITH *NIPO TAYARI*

Although political endorsement and cooperation was actively pursued throughout *Nyumba Ni Choo*'s five-year run, it was especially important during the campaign's design and initial implementation, when it was necessary to build momentum for the upcoming sanitation initiatives. As a result, Tanzania's national sanitation campaign began in June 2017 with a unique programme of political engagement known as *Nipo Tayari*, or 'I am ready'.

Launched by the country's Minister of Health, *Nipo Tayari* was an innovative outreach effort specifically designed to encourage a wide range of politicians, top government officials, development partners and businesses to publicly commit to support the national sanitation campaign and improve hygiene and sanitation in the communities where they worked. Special events were set up where these commitments could be made and recorded. Visual and video content captured at these events was then amplified across different media platforms to create a ripple effect that reached other leaders across the country. To give the engagement drive a distinct visual identity, the *Nyumba Ni Choo* team produced a bespoke *Nipo Tayari* frame in which newly pledged allies of the campaign could pose for photographs.

## FROM WORDS TO ACTION

After being trialled in the south-eastern region of Morogoro, *Nipo Tayari* was introduced in 18 other regions across Tanzania. By the time *Nipo Tayari* ended in December 2017, the national sanitation campaign had been endorsed by Members of Parliament, Regional Commissioners, Regional

Administrative Secretaries, District Commissioners and District Executive Directors throughout the country. Development partners such as the World Bank had also been successfully encouraged to cooperate with *Nyumba Ni Choo*.

Importantly, these commitments translated into real impacts for Tanzania's sanitation push. Firstly, *Nipo Tayari*'s broad geographic coverage and widespread media presence ensured that politicians and government officials of all ranks were already familiar with *Nyumba Ni Choo* and its aims when it was fully launched in December 2017. This allowed the campaign to hit the ground running.

Secondly, the public buy-in from senior leaders meant that members of the government were personally invested in the campaign's success and motivated to improve sanitation coverage in the regions and districts they were responsible for. This led to hygiene and sanitation goals being enshrined in the country's regional agendas. For the Ward Executive Officers and Village Executive Officers tasked with supervising the local implementation of these agendas, senior endorsement reinforced the importance of the campaign.

## LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

Another measure of *Nipo Tayari*'s success was that it encouraged high-level officials to voluntarily design and adopt additional commitments to hygiene and sanitation in their communities. In Songwe Region, for example, Ilaje District Commissioner Joseph Mkude launched the *Jenga Choo Na Mkude* ('Build your toilet with Mkude') campaign, which freely provided iron sheets and cement to people who had started building an improved toilet in a bid to motivate others. In neighbouring Mbozi District Council, a campaign called *Shule Ni Choo* – 'A school is not complete without toilets' – called for the community to build school toilets. Nationally, Members of Parliament raised TZS 902 million (GBP 306,000) to improve primary school toilets in an unprecedented fundraising drive spearheaded by a former Speaker of the National Assembly.



A *Nipo Tayari* event in Zanzibar.

These spin-off campaigns highlight *Nipo Tayari*'s remarkable success in engaging and mobilising Tanzania's leaders – not just to provide a perfunctory seal of approval, but to understand the importance of the campaign and invest time, money and energy in ensuring it met its ambitious targets. By the close of *Nyumba Ni Choo* in 2021, seven regions had reached 75% coverage of improved toilets and a further 19 had reached 60%. A review of the campaign found that 97% of Tanzanians were aware of *Nyumba Ni Choo* and that two-thirds of government officials in the relevant areas had personally attended a campaign event. *Nipo Tayari*'s innovative design and implementation can serve as a model for future public health campaigns around the world.



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