

Reducing costs, improving lives: how *Nyumba Ni Choo* achieved value for money

Can GBP 15 million transform a country's hygiene and sanitation behaviours? By embedding value for money at the heart of its design and implementation, Tanzania's national sanitation campaign was able to achieve remarkable results in just five years.

TANZANIA'S NATIONAL SANITATION CAMPAIGN

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, with GBP 15 million funding from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, initiated a five-year mass communications campaign in 2017 to encourage 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.'

The design and implementation of *Nyumba Ni Choo* was led by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and the Tanzanian company Project CLEAR. To realise



Community events proved a highly cost-effective way of reaching audiences.

the campaign's ambitious aims, they knew they would have to prioritise value for money from the outset. Value for money can be defined as maximising the impact of each pound spent to improve lives. This does not mean doing things as cheaply as possible, but striking a balance between costs and benefits.

ENSURING VALUE FOR MONEY

For *Nyumba Ni Choo*, a flexible, adaptive approach to campaigning proved key to achieving this balance. For example, after initially outsourcing the production of campaign materials, the decision was made to create all materials in-house, as it would allow for the timely production of more materials, of better quality, and at a significantly lower cost. Analysis of available data for 2019 and 2020 revealed that *Nyumba Ni Choo* spent a total of TZS 273 million producing campaign materials – well below the estimated market cost of TZS 365 million. This equates to a cost saving ratio of 0.25, meaning that, for every piece of campaign content produced, *Nyumba Ni Choo* saved 25% of the production costs.

Further savings were made during the distribution of campaign materials. This was essential to the overall success of *Nyumba Ni Choo*, as distribution costs are typically the most expensive component of a campaign, usually accounting for over 80% of implementation budgets. The campaign team therefore secured partnerships with local and national media houses, as well as institutions such as the Tanzania Football Federation and the Tanzania Police Force, to distribute campaign materials. This enabled *Nyumba Ni Choo* to take advantage of established audiences and platforms, such as the Tanzania Football Federation's Vodacom Premier League, to maximise the public's interaction with the campaign. For radio and television content, further savings were achieved by negotiating long-term deals with broadcasters in return for cheaper airtime.

The decision to put community events at the heart of *Nyumba Ni Choo's* outreach also boosted value for money. These events had an average cost per person reached of just TZS 578, compared to TZS 35,916 for regional radio broadcasts, TZS 175,478 for national radio broadcasts and TZS 324,286 for television adverts, making them by far the cheapest way to reach audiences. Photos, videos and audio recordings captured at community events were also shared on digital media platforms – an integrated communications approach that effectively used these events as sources of free *Nyumba Ni Choo* content. Together with other distribution arrangements, this saved *Nyumba Ni Choo* an estimated TZS 2.8 billion – almost GBP 1 million.

Underpinning all of these actions was a strong focus on real-time monitoring and evaluation. To avoid wasteful spending, campaign materials and messages were prototyped and tested to ensure they produced the desired effect before being rolled out. During implementation, the campaign team used various monitoring tools and commissioned quarterly surveys to assess campaign progress. The findings from these evaluations informed the creative direction of *Nyumba Ni Choo* messaging.



Partnering with the Tanzania Football Federation gave *Nyumba Ni Choo* access to a large, established audience.



The number of houses in Tanzania with basic handwashing facilities more than doubled during *Nyumba Ni Choo's* five-year run.

WHY VALUE FOR MONEY MATTERS

By embedding value for money into *Nyumba Ni Choo's* development and implementation, the campaign team were able to achieve impacts far beyond what would be expected using market rates. During the campaign, 5.8 million households – approximately 29.1 million Tanzanians – improved their latrines and installed handwashing facilities, raising the proportion of Tanzanian households with these facilities from 14.7% to 41.9%. Official reports by the Tanzanian government show that, from 2017 to 2021, access to improved sanitation in Tanzania as a whole increased from 42% to 70%, and open defecation reduced from 7.2% to 1.3%.

Nyumba Ni Choo demonstrates how value for money can be achieved with a combination of effective negotiating strategies and partnerships, thorough monitoring and evaluation and, most importantly, a willingness to adapt campaign practices in the face of changing circumstances or new information. *Nyumba Ni Choo* stands as a prime example of how a large, ambitious and multi-year mass communications campaign can achieve its objectives while remaining cost-effective.



PROJECT
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INNOVEX

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

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