

COMMUNITY REPORT



The Ministry of Health with the Centre for Infectious Disease Research Zambia (CIDRZ) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) did a research study to improve the quality of household shared toilets. This was done by encouraging landlords to make small improvements to their toilets in Bauleni compound in Lusaka.

Why improve toilets?

Around 465 million people around the world use shared toilets in settlements like Bauleni. A household shared toilet is a toilet that is shared by more than one household on a plot. In Bauleni, about 15 people share one toilet on a plot. When shared toilets are not properly built, maintained and cleaned, they are a source of disease for people using them. Due to this, it is important that shared toilets are well built, maintained and cleaned.



Why did we only work with Landlords?

We spoke with people in Bauleni about shared toilets and found out important information. We were told that Landlords are responsible for building toilets and buying materials to maintain them and tenants were responsible for cleaning. We also found out that people argue about cleaning because some people do not clean the toilet when they are supposed to. Also, tenants are not happy because outsiders use their toilet when they are not supposed to and mess it up. Using this information, we developed a programme to encourage landlords to change their behaviour and improve their toilets.

The study focused on improving four important things:

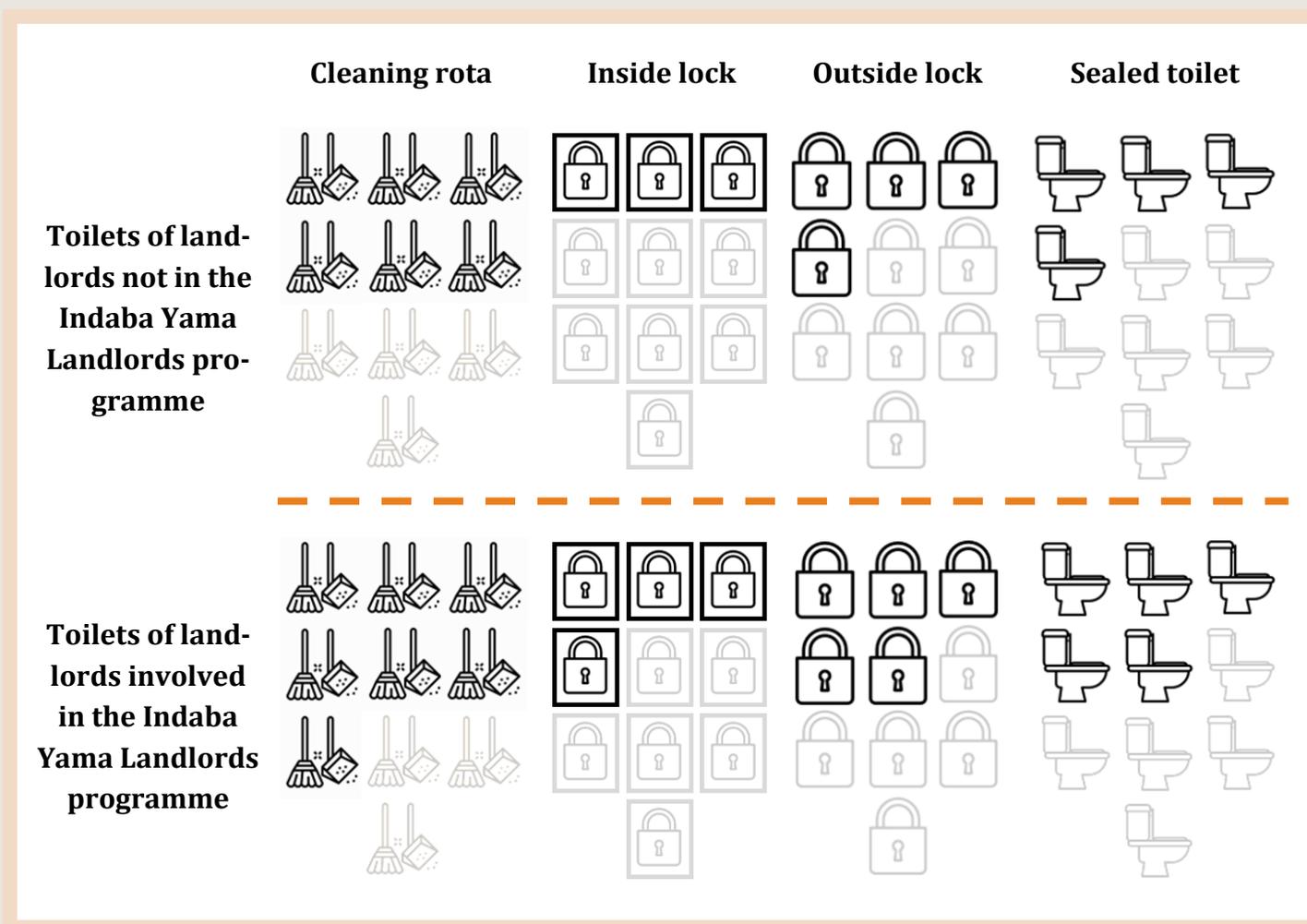
- ◆ Having a well-functioning cleaning rota/schedule so that landlords and tenants easily know whose turn it is to clean the toilet.
- ◆ A lock on the inside of the toilet door so that those using it have privacy and security.
- ◆ A lock on the outside of the toilet door to stop outsiders from using the toilet.
- ◆ A cover or sealed pan for the hole of the toilet to reduce bad smells.

How were behaviours promoted?

We invited 474 landlords to attend Indaba Yama Landlords secret meetings that promoted the four changes for their toilets. The other 454 were not invited in the programme because we wanted to compare them with those who were in the programme and see whether the programme was good enough to encourage landlords to make these changes. In the meetings, landlords discussed the problems around the four issues and were encouraged to make changes using carefully created videos, demonstrations and games. They were also taught how to make these changes to their toilets by themselves without needing any assistance.

Results

We visited the plots that were invited for the secret meetings (474) and those plots that were not invited (454) and viewed their toilets and asked them questions on the four improvements. We then compared their answers and found that those that had attended the secret meetings made improvements to their plots. Toilet improvements were measured around four months after the last Indaba Yama Landlords meeting and there was around a 10 percentage-point increase in the intervention group across all the four areas measured.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Motivating landlords through regular meetings and helping them see the importance of making these changes can lead to improved quality of shared toilets and reduce the spread of disease.



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