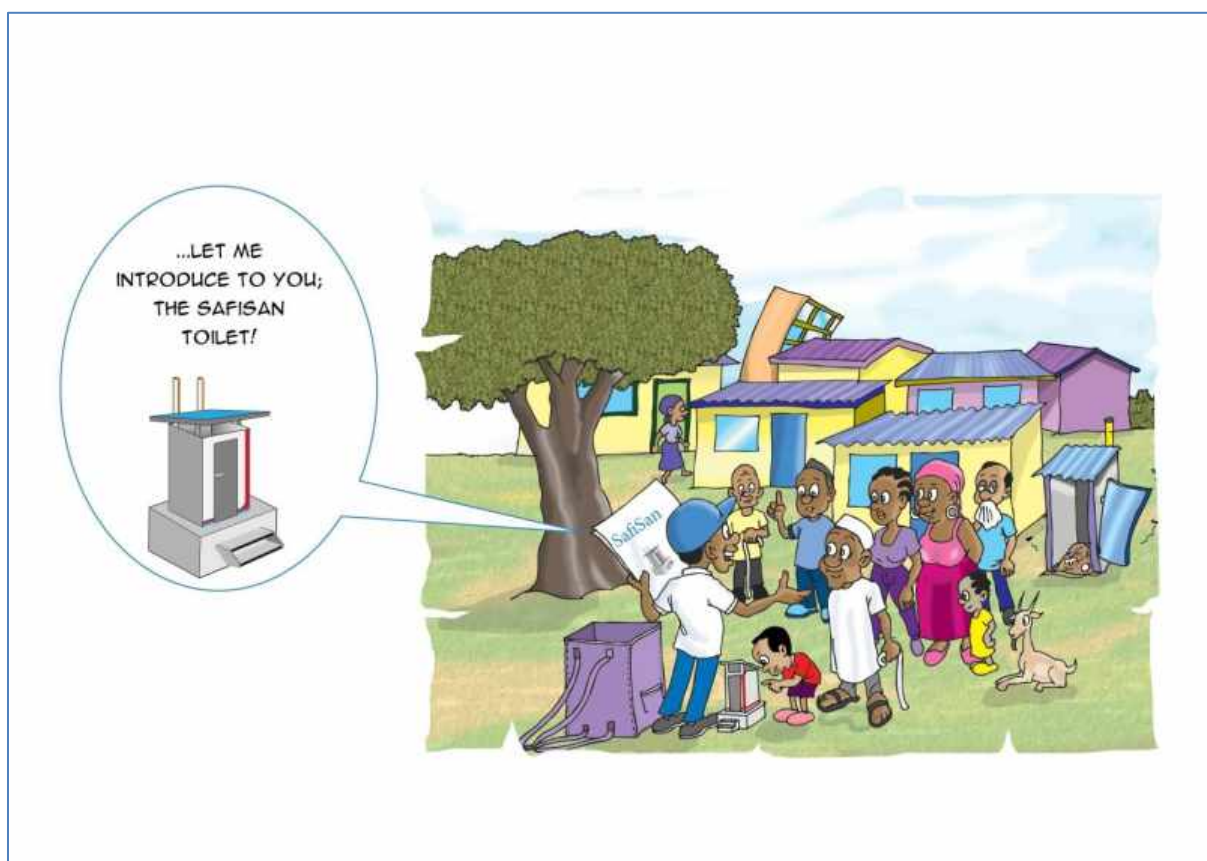




WATER SECTOR TRUST FUND & GIZ

Up-scaling Basic Sanitation for the Urban Poor (UBSUP)

Social Marketing and the Impact of Time & Space



A SafiSan social marketing meeting (illustration by Vincent Nyalik)

Prepared by the UBSUP Team

Social Marketing of Improved Toilets & Practices

1. Introduction

SafiSan projects dedicate a lot of time, efforts and resources to the social marketing of improved sanitation: better toilets and sanitation practices.

SafiSan awareness creation and social marketing programmes usually consist of a number of community-based activities such as:

- Awareness creation through banners, PA messages and even the local media.
- Awareness creation during barazas and other SafiSan event (e.g. the SafiSan Mini Fairs).
- The construction of demo-toilets.
- Plot-to-plot visits conducted by the Sanitation Marketers.

In addition to emphasising the advantages of improved sensitisation and the SafiSan post construction incentive (the “carrots” approach) SafiSan projects, through the active participation of the Public Health Officers also try to enforce the Public Health Act and other (local) by-laws (the “sticks” approach).

Although the SafiSan projects aim to reach all residents in the project area, the social marketing programme also relies on the dynamics that exists within the project area. Investing in better toilets and adopting new sanitation practices is unlikely to take place without such word-of-mouth sensitisation, peer pressure, tenants pressurising landlords. The adoption of new facilities and practices usually takes time, simply because they require a change in behaviour (e.g. using an improved toilet and washing hands after every toilet visit) and a cost. Social marketing aims to speed up the adoption of innovations and new practices also by lowering the threshold by explaining the unknown and emphasising the benefits. In other words, yes it costs money to get a SafiSan toilet but it's not just a cost, it's an investment and likely a cost saver (the cost of visiting the clinic, etc.).

A very successful introduction of new practices and facilities that benefit the individual, the family and the community at large, often results in a lasting change of norms and values. The impact of SafiSan interventions may be (and let's hope so) that old fashioned traditional pit latrines become regarded as outdated and simply unacceptable. This process can even be accelerated if sufficient emphasis is placed on enforcement.

This short document focusses upon the more autonomous and, therefore, less controllable (manageable), aspects of social marketing.

TIME: We ask ourselves what happens with the social marketing message over time and after the SafiSan team has moved out.

SPACE: We also consider the fact that although a SafiSan project may target a specific (project) area the message may spread outside the area. This can happen because “outsiders” also listen to the radio, attend SafiSan activities (e.g. *barazas*) and see the SafiSan toilets, but equally because the message gradually spreads outside the area by word-of-mouth.

2. Spatial aspects of Social Marketing

SafiSan projects target specific urban low income areas. This focus is reflected in large number of area/community based activities. A Water Service Provider (WSP) and the SafiSan project Task Team cannot prevent, however, that the messages spread beyond the boundaries of the project area. This can happen because “outsiders” also listen to the radio, attend SafiSan activities (e.g. *barazas*) and see the (beautiful and clean) SafiSan toilets, but equally because the message gradually spreads outside the area by word-of-mouth.

The autonomous (non-project) spreading of social marketing messages usually occurs first in the neighbouring (surrounding) areas. However, this does not need to be the case. It is possible that the

messages introduced by a pro-poor programme in a specific urban slum travel faster to another slum on the other side of town than to the nearby high income areas, simply because there is not much communication between these diverse areas or whilst well-to-do people do not belong to the target group of the programme. The messages disseminated by a programme targeting a low-income area with a majority of Muslim population may spread faster to a Muslim community located in a different part of the city than to the population of a nearby slum with a majority Christian population.

3. Temporal aspects of Social Marketing

It is not only impossible to fully control where the SafiSan message spreads to, it is also difficult to prevent people from interpreting, changing the message. Some examples from the SafiSan pilot projects show that word-of-mouth sensitisation/marketing may result in residents getting a good idea on the project but not necessarily all the right information.

Word-of-mouth marketing may also result in the emergence (fabrication) of rumours (e.g. “the Company does not have the money to pay the post construction incentive”, “The post construction incentive is KSh 30,000” instead of KSh 20,000). Interpretation and gradual transformation may not restrict themselves to the social marketing messages but can include hardware; the SafiSan toilets. Even after the closure of the SafiSan landlords may decide to build a SafiSan toilet, simply because it has become the new standard (norm) or whilst the PHO insists that all tenants have access to adequate sanitation.

The construction of such SafiSan toilets - outside the framework of the UBSUP programme - may result in intended or unintended changes in toilet design and materials used. From a user or public health perspective some of these changes may be highly undesirable.

4. Implications for SafiSan Projects

Taking advantage of spatial aspects of social marketing

In order to reduce the risk of transformation (or undesired interpretations and rumours) the messages have to be clear and simple. The more complicated the message the higher the chances that word-of-mouth will result in message changing and distortion.

But if the messages are indeed clear and simple, there is scope, to benefit from emerging patterns of autonomous marketing. Often this means that new project areas are identified in the vicinity of existing project areas. The benefits can be expressed in financial terms (cost effectiveness and savings) but also in terms of efficiency. A new SafiSan project phase could benefit from the progress made during the previous phase or phases:

- The same demonstration toilets can be used (if distances are acceptable).
- In addition to demo toilets from the previous phase, the existing incentivised SafiSan toilets sold to residents will become strong social marketing tools (toilets marketing themselves). Not only every single toilet, but equally their (visible) number. The impact upon perception, opinion and decision making of walking through an area where a majority of the plots have new, clean and attractive toilets should not be underestimated.
- Fewer community-based activities (e.g. barazas) are needed to make residents aware and to create demand for toilets.
- Less time has to be spent on creating trust among residents. They will know that the WSP is “serious”, does provide the promised support, and does pay the post construction incentive.

Dealing with the temporal spatial aspects of social marketing

The gradual transformation (dilution, re-interpretation, etc.) of sensitisation and marketing messages and structures (toilets) can have a negative impact upon the subsequent phases of a SafiSan project.

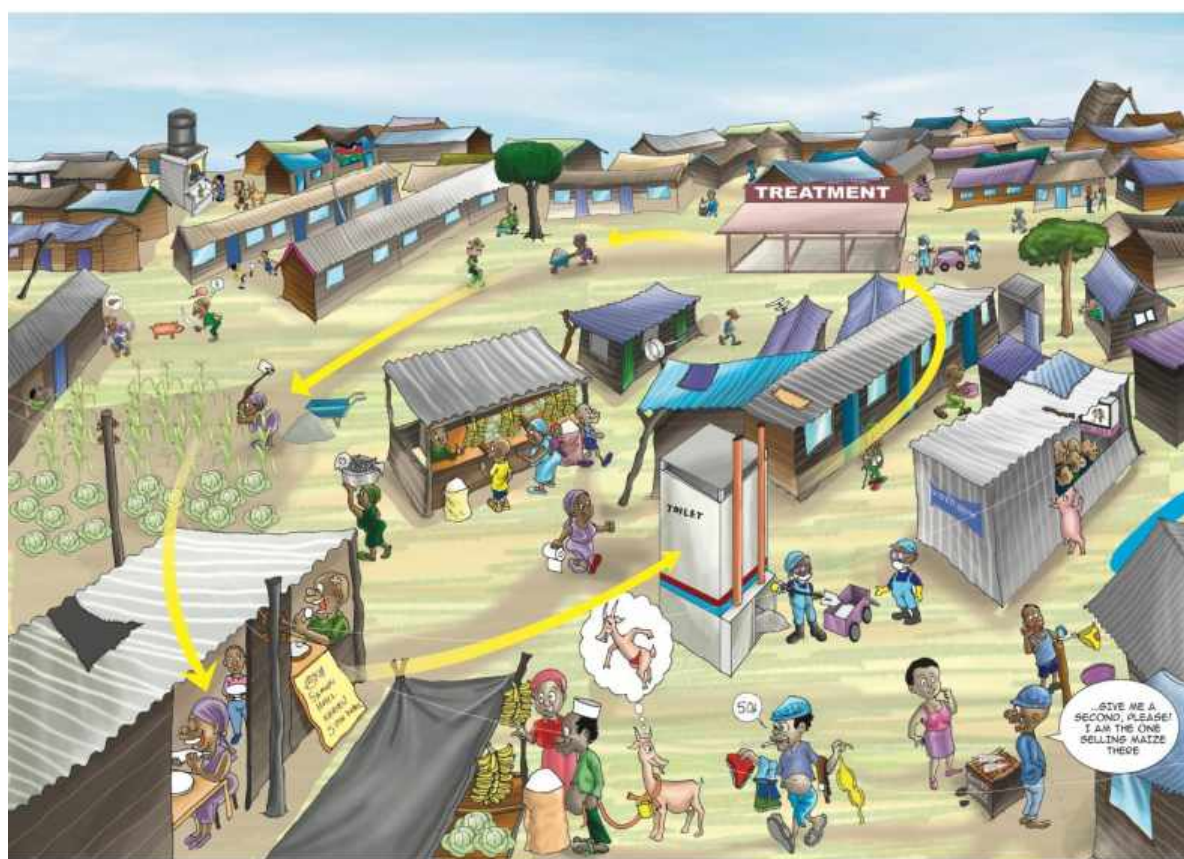
Artisans may end up making unwanted shortcuts, leaving out certain features that are important to the UBSUP programme as well as to the customers.

Ensuring that **(1)** residents who were not reached by more informal communications (e.g. the elderly the physically challenged and other less mobile residents), that **(2)** messages remain correct and that **(3)** toilets continue to be built according to UBSUP specifications, provides sufficient justification for having each phase of a SafiSan project accompanied by a social marketing package and programme. These packages and programme can be more modest in terms of budget and activities.

In other words, during their phase 2 and subsequent phases, SafiSan projects should try to make use of the autonomous diffusion of positive information within and outside the initial project area. Formal social marketing remains necessary to ensure that the messages remain unchanged and that all infrastructures meet the set technical and design standards.

Abbreviations used

PA:	Public address (system; e.g. a megaphone)
UBSUP:	Up-scaling Basic Sanitation for the Urban Poor
WSP:	Water Service Provider



Remember: Sanitation is a Human Right!