

## IMPROVING SANITATION IN KAMPALA

ADVERT

# How Kampala Capital City Authority is striding towards a cleaner and livable Kampala City

Kampala, like many rapidly growing cities, continues to grapple with numerous urban challenges—chief among them sanitation. The city's sanitation concerns stem from how human waste is contained, collected, transported and treated, with the greatest burden falling on densely populated informal settlements.

In these areas, poor sanitation heightens the risk of diseases such as cholera, typhoid, diarrhoea and dysentery.

Many sanitation facilities in these settlements are poorly constructed. A significant number of pit latrines and septic tanks are unlined, shared by multiple households—often five or more and, in extreme cases, up to 17. Others are clogged with solid waste, making faecal sludge emptying both difficult and more expensive.

According to data from the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), fewer than 10 per cent of city residents are connected to the sewer network. The vast majority rely on on-site sanitation: over 90 per cent of households use pit latrines—many of which are substandard—or septic tanks.

Some of the most affected slums include Kamwokya, where raw sewage flows through open drains; Bwaise, a densely populated area with inadequate facilities; and Ndeeba, which relies heavily on unimproved sanitation. Other affected areas include Kisenyi, Katwe, Namuwongo and Katanga.

## Strengthening faecal sludge management

To address these gaps, KCCA, through its City Wide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) Programme, has intensified efforts to improve the safe management of faecal sludge—paving the way for cleaner, healthier and more sustainable sanitation practices across Kampala.

A key component of this effort is the Weyonje campaign, themed "Build a toilet that meets the KCCA minimum standards, use it properly, and empty it safely using licensed private operators." The message captures the essential steps needed to safeguard public health.

To date, the Weyonje Behaviour Change Campaign has reached approximately 199,976 households, 73,440 landlords (34,247 men and 39,193 women), 18,202 commercial premises, and 3,040 institutions through door-to-door sensitisation across all divisions.

## Birth of the Weyonje Programme

Weyonje was launched in 2019 under the CWIS project as a behavioural change campaign aimed at encouraging proper sanitation practices. Over the years, it has grown into a broader movement promoting community responsibility, improved hygiene and better sanitation habits.

This year, sensitisation drives, community cleaning activities and door-to-door engagements have intensified across all five divisions, with KCCA teams, partners and Community Activation Team Members (CATS) educating landlords and residents on acceptable sanitation standards.

## The Weyonje Sanitation Challenge

The campaign's success inspired the creation of the Weyonje Sanitation Challenge, first held in 2019. This competitive initiative encourages divisions to outperform one another in cleanliness and organisation. The word Weyonje—meaning "cleanliness is a personal effort" in Luganda—captures the spirit of both the campaign and the challenge.

The challenge spans the divisions of Nakawa, Kawempe, Kampala Central, Makindye and Rubaga. Makindye Division won the competition last year, and the 2023/24 winner will be announced on 20 December.

KCCA's Director of Public Health and Environment, Dr Sarah Zalwango, explained the evaluation process. A panel drawn from various ministries conducts unannounced visits to homes, streets, toilets, restaurants and other facilities.

"We shall be everywhere," she said. "You never know when the judges will show up."

She also encouraged communities to document their cleaning activities on video, noting, "The scorecards are very detailed. We are looking for real commitment, not last-minute sweeping." Waste sorting remains a key component of the judging criteria, with emphasis on separating domestic waste from e-waste and medical waste. Residents are further encouraged to vote for the best sanitation videos through KCCA social media and the Authority's website.

## Community involvement and purpose

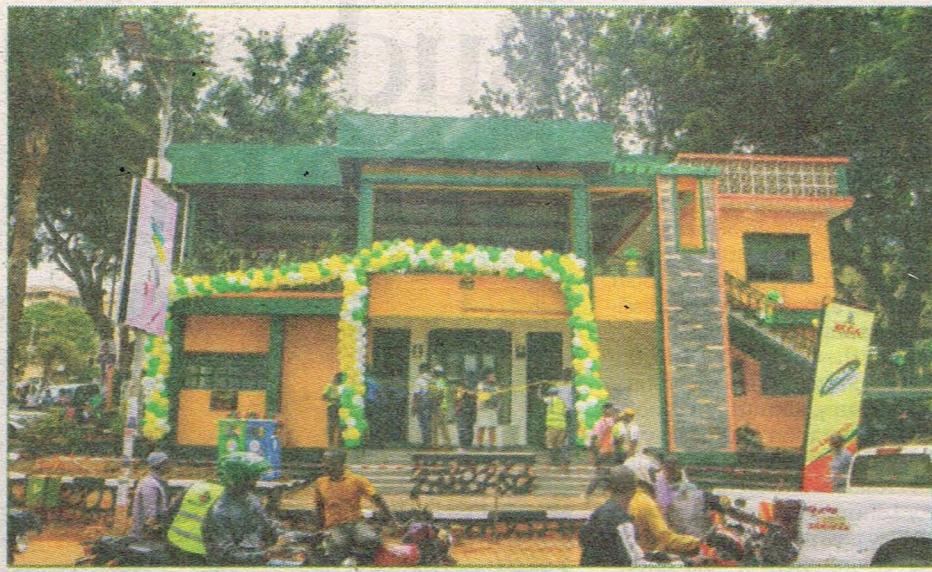
KCCA Executive Director Hajjat Sharifah Buzeki emphasised that the challenge seeks to strengthen hygiene and sanitation at community level. "Sanitation is crucial to human development," she said. "We need everyone—homes, businesses and institutions—to take part."

Communities participate in clean-up drives, waste-sorting and recycling activities, supported by KCCA through tools such as bins and protective gear. Education sessions continue to deepen residents' understanding of the dangers of poor sanitation.

Buzeki also urged the public to maintain the 36 public toilets KCCA has constructed, stressing that they belong to everyone. Her strongest appeal targeted the use of polythene bags, which she described as destructive to the environment due to their role in blocking drainage channels and damaging soil.

## Improving faecal sludge management

During the Weyonje campaign, KCCA teams assess faecal containment, collection; transportation, treatment and disposal to protect both public health and the environment. Solid waste in pit latrines remains a major challenge for em-



**City square KCCA public toilet built with support from the Gates Foundation under the City Wide Inclusive Sanitation Program. These toilets constructed are aimed at enhancing sanitation and relieving pressure on existing facilities.**

tiers, making collaborative efforts essential.

Divisions are scored based on the number of toilets inspected, cleanliness, presence of hand-washing facilities and whether the facilities have been safely emptied. Sanitation officers, CATS and Village Health Teams (VHTs) identify and document sanitation conditions before submitting reports to KCCA.

KCCA is currently piloting three semi-mechanised emptying technologies—the pupu pump, the gulper, and PitVac—to enhance desludging in densely populated and hard-to-access settlements.

KCCA is also working with the National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NW&SC) to expand faecal sludge disposal capacity. At Lubigi, the faecal sludge treatment site is being automated, and plans are underway to increase sewer connections.

## Technology, tools and infrastructure

Beyond faecal sludge management, KCCA has introduced new approaches to general waste management. Douglas Nsubuga, Town Clerk of Kampala Central Division, highlighted the "bring-to-truck" system, where garbage trucks are stationed at Owino and Nakasero markets to support the Smart City agenda.

Digital tools such as Water for Health Management Information Systems (HMIS), Epicollect and the SAP tool support data collection, monitoring of illegal dumping and sanitation planning. KCCA has also developed an integrated Public Health and Environment Dashboard for real-time data visualisation.

WASH training has been extended to 50 primary schools, complemented by the installation of child-friendly sanitation units.

Kampala currently generates an estimated 2,500 tonnes of waste daily, yet only about 1,500 tonnes are collected. The unmet volume often ends up in drainage channels and open spaces, worsening the city's sanitation challenges.

## Impact of the wider Weyonje Campaign

The outcomes are significant. The proportion of residents using improved sanitation facilities that meet KCCA minimum standards has risen from 50 percent to 87 percent. Over 100 masons, 123 informal emptiers and 20 construction companies have been trained to improve service delivery. A household improvement subsidy has also supported landlords in informal settlements, benefiting nearly 4,000 residents directly. At its core, the Weyonje Campaign—and the challenge within it—reminds Kampala that a clean city is a shared responsibility. Through community action, technological innovation and strategic partnerships, KCCA and residents are steadily reshaping the city's sanitation landscape. As one official remarked, "Weyonje is not just a programme. It is a mindset. When Kampala embraces it fully, the city will transform."

By promoting proper toilet construction, responsible use and regulated emptying services, the CWIS Programme is helping to transform faecal sludge management in Kampala's communities. KCCA reports that it has conducted 970 community clean-ups, emptied over 21,000 trips of faecal sludge, and held 395 community meetings and 186 barazas to educate residents.

The Weyonje programme encompasses solid waste management, faecal sludge management, hygiene, health inspection and waste collection—building a cleaner, healthier Kampala for all.



**Cesspool Truck emptying toilets in the community**



**Pitvac being tested in the communities**



**Weyonje House Hold Toilet built under the subsidy Model**