

'Peepoo' bag offers sanitary human waste disposal for pennies

March 4 2010, by Lisa Zyga



The inside of the single-use Peepoo bag is coated with urea crystals, which sterilize solid waste and break it down into fertilizer. Image credit: Peepoople.

(PhysOrg.com) -- About 40 percent of the earth's population, or 2.6 billion people, do not have access to a toilet, according to United Nations. The unsanitary conditions have resulted in contaminated drinking water that causes diseases, such as diarrhea, which has become one of the leading causes of death in young children.

While efforts have been made to design inexpensive toilets, Swedish inventor Anders Wilhelmson is taking an even more low-tech approach

to the problem. He has designed the “Peepoo,” a biodegradable plastic bag that serves as a single-use toilet for individuals in the developing world. After the bag is used and buried in the ground, urea crystals coating the bag sterilize the solid human waste and break it down into [fertilizer](#) for crops. Wilhelmson says that his company, Peepoople, can sell the bags for about 2 or 3 cents.

An architect and professor in Stockholm, Wilhelmson was inspired by the current [waste disposal](#) methods used in the urban slums in Kenya. People there simply put their human waste in a plastic bag and fling it away. The bags are called “helicopter toilets” or “flyaway toilets.” Wilhelmson’s Peepoo bag is basically an environmentally friendly alternative that costs about the same as the ordinary plastic bags. Plus, the Peepoo is odor-free for 24 hours so that it can temporarily be stored nearby. Wilhelmson has successfully piloted the bag in Kenya and India last year, and plans to mass-produce the bag this summer.

Wilhelmson hopes that the Peepoo bag could help the United Nations reach its goal to cut the number of people without access to toilets in half by 2015.

As an article in the *New York Times* notes, other low-cost toilets are also being introduced in the [developing world](#). For example, Singapore-based Rigel Technology recently demonstrated a \$30 toilet that separates solid and liquid waste and turns solid waste into [compost](#). A low-cost [toilet](#) that uses excrement to produce biogas to be used for cooking is being promoted by Sulabh International, an Indian nonprofit. However, Wilhelmson’s simple and inexpensive sanitizing bag may have the advantage of easy implementation, especially for people living in the most poor and rural areas.

More information: www.peepoople.com
via: [New York Times](#)

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Citation: 'Peepoo' bag offers sanitary human waste disposal for pennies (2010, March 4)
retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-03-peepoo-bag-sanitary-human-disposal.html>

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