Sustainable sanitation solution for urban slums

A couple of years ago we featured Peepoo, the Swedish-designed biodegradable plastic bag which, in an effort to tackle sanitation issues in developing countries, turns human waste into fertilizer. Now in Kenya, Sanergy is addressing the same serious problem, by using a waste management model that aims to turn human waste into power and profit.

Eight million people living in Kenya's slums lack access to adequate sanitation, but Sanergy — who started the project last year — hope to offer a solution in a four-part process. First, they build low-cost sanitation centers, each one designed to service 77 people with hot showers and clean toilets. These centers are then franchised to local entrepreneurs, financed by a local microfinance bank, who earn income through pay-per-use fees, membership plans and sales of additional products. Human waste is collected in air-tight containers and transported daily using handcarts to an immediate processing plant. Trucks then transfer the waste to a central processing facility where it's converted into energy which can be sold to the national grid. The conversion process also produces organic fertilizer, which can supply commercial and smallhold farms. The video below explains Sanergy in more detail:

With 1.7 million deaths and a loss of USD 84 billion due to sanitation-related diseases every year, Sanergy is addressing a very real need. Could this model offer a solution to social, environmental and economical issues all in one?

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