

Low cost hospital bed helps fight epidemics



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In recent years there have been a disturbing amount of disease epidemics. In 2014, 11,323 deaths were recorded as a result of the West Africa Ebola outbreak, and in 2015-16 the Zika virus spread across the world, infecting thousands. Springwise has covered several innovations, created in response to such epidemics. From products designed to help prevent infection such as [this](#) newspaper printed with mosquito repelling ink, to broader technology-based ideas like [this](#) software which uses big data and AI to predict where the next outbreak will be.

The latest innovation to help during disease outbreaks is the Ubuntu containment bed, designed to both increase patient comfort and stop the spread of infection. The simple bamboo frame is easy to construct and can be built by a single person in roughly one hour. Tyvek material is looped around the structure to create a comfortable mattress and a privacy barrier. Embedded with microbial barrier properties, the material acts as a protection against infection. The contaminated fabric can be removed and replaced by a fresh sheet after each use, ensuring continued protection. Assembly instructions are printed directly on the material. The proposal also includes local artwork printed on the privacy barrier and the mattress in an effort to comfort patients and build trust through design by applying the region's traditional and cultural graphic styles. Designer Ileris Ilbasan named the bed 'Ubuntu', a word which meaning 'The belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity.'

One of the major problems during the Ebola outbreak was the lack of capacity. With only 30% of the required capacity available, many of the contagious incoming patients had to go back to their

communities, thereby infecting others. Could this kind of product help overcome the lack of resources, containing the next big epidemic outbreak?

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