

# Frederika Whitehead - Poo Power: Turning Human Waste Into Clean Energy



Photo: [thestar.com.my](http://thestar.com.my)

*thestar.com.my* November 2014. Bio-centres which transform human waste into electricity prove that faeces is the ultimate source of renewable energy.

They call them “*flying toilets*” – the bags of human poo that are thrown out of the windows of the thousands of small shacks that make up Nairobi’s slums.

The largest of Nairobi’s informal settlements is Kibera, just 4.8km from the city centre. An estimated one million people live there, and toilet facilities are scarce. The bare earth streets are carved with gullies: equal parts open sewer and rubbish dump. The nearest toilet for most people is a hole they have dug in a bare patch of ground at the back of their shacks.

But Josiah Omotto, a managing trustee of the Umande trust, has high ambitions: he wants Nairobi to become an open defecation-free city. It’s a big challenge to set for yourself.

“If open defecation was banned in Nairobi today, every member of the informal settlements would have to queue for two days to use the existing toilet facilities,” he says.

Read more: <http://www.thestar.com.my/Poo-power>