

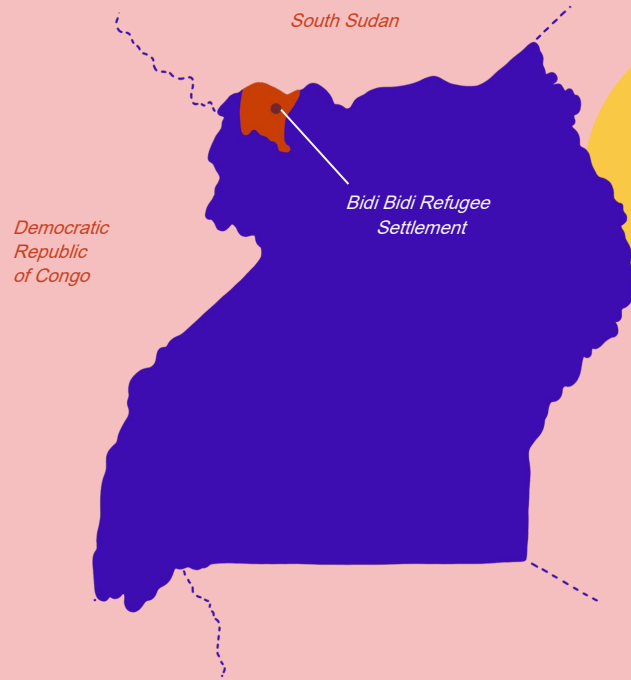
y.labs



Understanding Disposal

RECOMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE IMPLIMENTATIONS

MARCH 2022



Project Context

The Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, located in the west Nile area of Uganda in Yumbe district. It is split in up into 5 zones (Zones 1 - 5) and it is one of the largest refugee settlements in the world, currently home to 242,608 refugees.



The Problem Statement

Limited access to menstrual health (MH) products and supplies, along with safe, private, spaces for disposal is a pressing problem for menstruators in humanitarian crises.

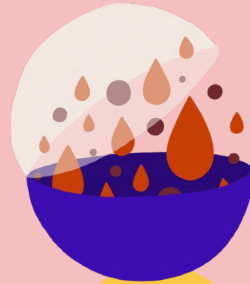
Disposal Decision Ecosystem

Drivers of menstruator
behavior that impact
disposal decisions



Product Choice

- Water Access
- Convenience
- Size of Flow
- Health Concerns
- Affordability



Product Usage

- Availability
- Comfort
- Accessibility of Private Space



Disposal

- MHM Friendly Spaces
- Infrastructure
- Privacy
- Safety
- Convenience

Physical Health Risks

- Menstruators overuse products when adequate disposal is absent
- Overuse of products leads to a greater risk of infections and absorption of toxins

Loss of Income & Education

- Menstruators are forced to miss work/ school
- Menstruation management affects the ability to concentrate on school/ work

Environmental Pollution

- Burning of used products can lead to the release of toxic gases.
- Burying or throwing products can contaminate areas and affect ecosystems.

Psychological Stress, Anxiety & Social Trauma

- Menstruators experience fear, stigma, anxiety, shame, and embarrassment.
- Menstruators fear the discovery of used products by others.

Types of Disposal Methods

We identified six typical methods that people who menstruate use to dispose of products, depending on their culture, context, and product type.



Burning Pads

- Burning disposable pads is not straightforward. Pads need to be dried out beforehand or they will not fully combust. Drying of pads before burning is not an easy or trusted process as an unattended pad may be found by men/children.

Preferred Disposal Method

- The preferred product disposal method is a pit latrine, as it offers the most discretion and anonymity.

Risk of Resurfacing

- Menstrual products disposed of in latrines risk resurfacing as the latrine fills, causing community members to blame menstruators.


Fear of Being Found

- Menstruators have a fear of used pads being found and used for witchcraft.

“I feel scared disposing pads when many people are at home. Away from home, there is no better place to dispose of pads. I could dispose of my pads in the bush, but that also makes me feel ashamed.”

: Menstruator, 21





Spaces that offer disposal options need to take into account that menstruators will not have peace of mind unless their discarded products are safe from tampering.

*To Be Successful,
A Disposal
System Needs
To:*

01 *Be co-designed with diverse menstruating users and community stakeholders.*

02 *Complement “hardware” (infrastructure) with “software” (social behavioral interventions).*

03 *Be compatible with existing regional and national waste management systems.*

04 *Reassure the user of complete eradication of product or blood at or after the point -of-disposal.*

05 *Provide the user privacy and safety during disposal or washing at any time of day or night.*

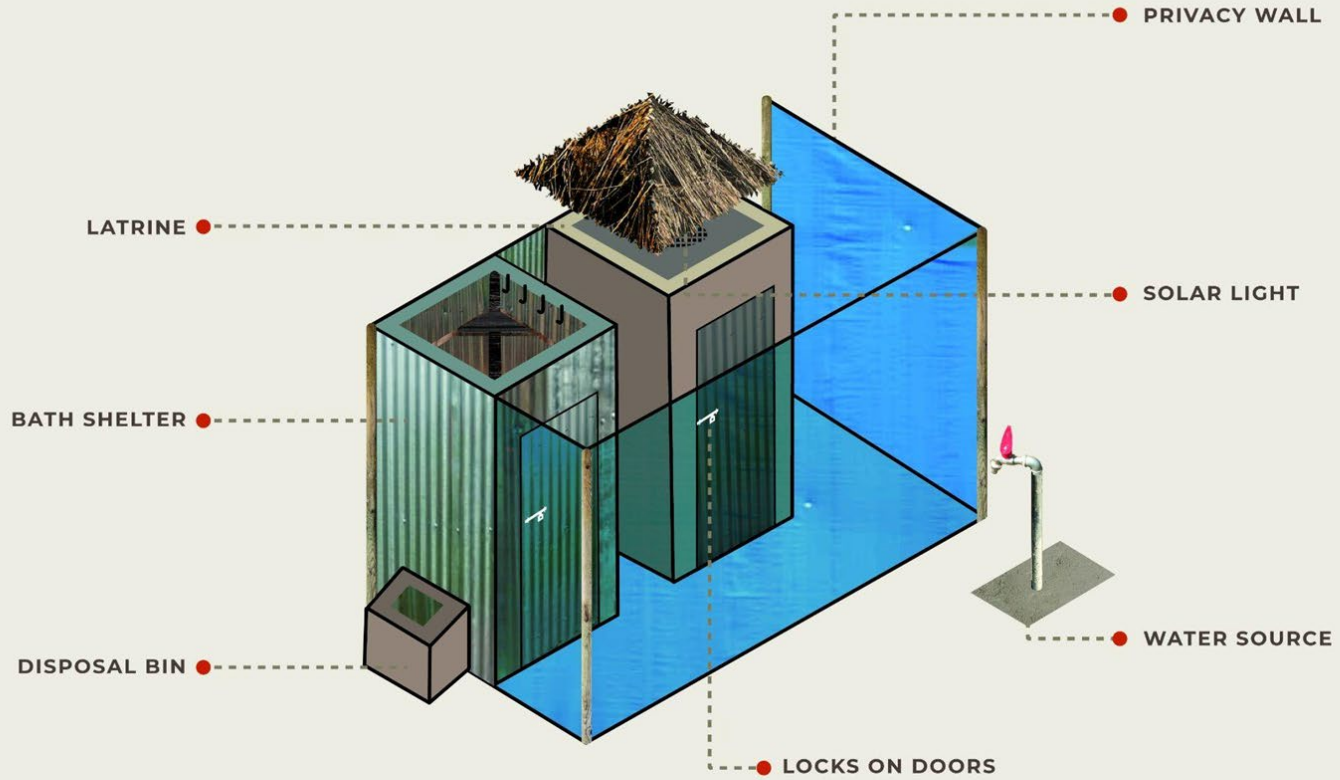
06 *Function with low upfront capital requirements and low - cost ongoing maintenance, or have mechanisms for cost recovery.*



Solutions We Tested

In May 2021, YLabs commenced the pilot of the Cocoon Mini, a semi -permanent latrine and bathing area that is built within household compounds and is accessible to families in the surrounding area.

THE COCOON MINI



“The Cocoon Mini has helped me because I no longer dispose of used pads in the bush as usual since the Mini spaces are in all the villages.”

: Menstruator, Over 24



*Factors that
alleviated
disposal
challenges*

*01 Designed by
and for
menstruators*

*02 Increased
access to water
points*

*03 Menstruators can
change/wash used
products at their
convenience*

*04 Enhanced
likelihood of product
final disposal*

*05 Improved privacy
and safety*

COST ANALYSIS

Cost Analysis

Cost of 1 site \approx USD 360

Cost of 20 sites \approx USD 7150

Cost of 2 incinerators \approx USD 4220

No. of menstruators reached (per site) \approx 15

No. of menstruators reached (20 sites) \approx 300

Cost per person reached \approx USD 24





Improving the System

Future investment and development is needed to create dignified, sustainable, and safe disposal systems in low and middle income countries and humanitarian contexts.

Recommendations for Future Work

— Improve disposal systems and norms in partnership with menstruators

- Exploring and testing improvements to disposal systems *using participatory methods with menstruators in LMIC contexts.*
- Conducting sessions with **non-menstruating people** (e.g., men and boys) to explore opportunities for socially supportive “software” interventions.

Understand the disposal ecosystem

- Conducting **user research** with waste pickers, de-sludgers, and other **waste management system stakeholders** on their needs and constraints

Explore pathways for financial sustainability

- Research and testing of opportunities for **income-generating or incentivized disposal solutions** that can benefit the community.

Multi-sectoral approach to disposal

- *When addressing menstrual waste disposal it is important to note that it's issue require a multi-sectoral approach. The water sanitation and hygiene, waste management, and sexual and reproductive health and rights sectors need to collaborate in order to effectively address disposal on a systemic level.*

Thank You!