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IN PERU, BEACH CLEANUP SCHEME HELPS DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE BECOME ENTREPRENEURS

 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Plastic Bank enables those participating in recycling initiatives to exchange their help for training, micro-loans and access to 3D printing facilities.

The ocean is full of waste produced by humans, and beaches often end up collecting the debris that washes ashore, which is unsightly and potentially deadly to marine animals. While cleanup initiatives have the obvious benefit of ridding trash from coastlines, the recyclable waste can also be used for creating products and opportunities. In the past we've seen schemes in the UK develop the [Sea Chair](#) — a stool made entirely of trash trawled from the ocean — and now [Plastic Bank](#) is enabling those participating in beach cleanups in Peru to exchange their help for training, micro-loans and access to 3D printing facilities.

Created by US entrepreneur David Katz, the project aims to give impoverished citizens in developing nations the opportunity to grow their skills while also giving something to the community they live in. For its trial scheme, Plastic Bank is setting up in Peru, where unemployed people can join in cleanup operations to collect the plastic waste that is abundant in the worst polluted areas of the country. Volunteers are then rewarded for their time with credits that can be exchanged at the bank for training in recycling and waste management, access to 3D printers that can turn the collected plastic into useful objects, and micro-loans that will help them set up their own business. The aim of the scheme is to encourage disempowered people to see the value in both the resources that often get thrown away, as well as themselves.

Plastic Banks tackles two important issues in one fell swoop, and if successful will be launching in other polluted areas around the world. Are there other benefits recycling schemes can offer

communities, aside from the self-evident environmental gains?

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