

These women get rid of cigarette butts and turn them into bioplastic



Gabriela González Neávez and Mixara Muñoz Troncoso have set up the company **Yekuali**, which **transforms cigarette butts into bioplastic**.

These students from **Tec de Monterrey's Saltillo campus** then manufacture several ecological products with this material.

Their aim is also to **reduce** the amount of cigarette butts in public spaces, as these are a source of **pollution**.



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According to studies performed by the organization [Ocean Conservancy](#) in 2011, one **cigarette butt** can pollute between 8 and 15 liters of seawater and 50 liters of drinking water.

“Many people separate and recycle plastic or paper but dropping cigarette butts on the ground is something we’ve normalized. It’s common to see them there,” said Gabriela.

These students decided to take advantage of the fact that cigarette butts are **degradable** and **recyclable**.



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Yekuali aims to **collect and dispose** of this waste by turning it into bioplastic.

To do so, Gabriela and Mixara **offer containers** to businesses, establishments, or institutions so that they can separate cigarette butts from the rest of the garbage.

“We don’t just ask companies for cigarette butts. We also sell containers and rent the collection service. Once we receive them, we do the cleaning and transformation,” added Mixara.

They use the bioplastic obtained to make **ashtrays** or **drink coasters**, which they also sell.



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The initial goal of the project was to **raise awareness of pollution** from this type of waste.

“If you separate the cigarette butts and then throw them away anyway, it’s pointless,” said Gabriela.

Their current goal is to give a **second life** to cigarette butts through their recycling process.



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“We want to give a second life to cigarette butts and stop normalizing this habit, which is harmful to the environment,” they concluded.

Both Mixara and Gaby see Yekuali’s future as a **company that raises awareness** of how important it is not to normalize any kind of pollution.

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