



Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives
Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance

Zero Waste for Zero Warming *Because no community is disposable!*

⇒ **WASTE**

Waste is an international problem. In our globalized economy, raw materials are constantly extracted, processed in factories, shipped around the world, and ultimately burned or buried in communities at an ever-increasing rate. Yet solving this problem requires much more than technical fixes: how we manage waste is part of a larger web of decisions about health, equity, race, power, gender, poverty, and governance.

GAIA members challenge the false “burn or bury” dichotomy and promote positive solutions to waste at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

⇒ **HEALTH**

Incinerators and landfills threaten human health, especially in poor and marginalized communities where they are often located. *Incinerators* are significant sources of powerful pollutants well-known for their toxic impacts on human health and the environment. This is true of *all incinerator technologies* including “gasification,” “pyrolysis,” “plasma arc,” and “waste-to-energy.” Gases escaping from *landfills* contain toxic pollutants that can cause cancer, asthma, and other serious health effects, and *all landfills* will eventually leak and pollute groundwater.

GAIA supports network members in educating communities and governments about these health dangers and has published resources and tools available at www.no-burn.org.

⇒ *“The workers in [the recycling sector] live and work on the fringes of the economy. They go about their business of collecting paper, plastic, metal, glass and other recyclables. Their livelihoods are under threat from technology providers hawking quick-fix solutions, like RDF, plasma, pyrolysis, gasification and other euphemisms for incineration. Cloaked in the guise of renewable energy, they claim carbon credits for sending toxic gases into the atmosphere.”*

— Lakshmi Narayan of Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP), the Pune-based association for ragpickers, in *The Times of India*

⇒ **CLIMATE**

All incinerators emit more carbon dioxide per unit of electricity produced than coal-fired power plants. Landfills are a leading producer of anthropogenic methane, a greenhouse gas 72 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Yet the greatest global warming impact of incinerators and landfills is the fact that these technologies destroy valuable recyclable materials. *For every item that is burned or buried, a new one must be made from raw materials. The resulting extraction, processing and manufacturing cause significant greenhouse gas emissions.*

GAIA is influencing climate policy by advocating for recycling, composting, biogas, zero waste and producer responsibility as alternatives to burning and burying our waste.

⇒ **ECONOMY**

Governments and international bodies (including the Clean Development Mechanism) too often subsidize and prioritize “waste management” strategies such as incineration and landfills rather than focusing on reducing waste, recycling, re-use, and composting. Incinerators are big business and by far the most expensive discard management option available, representing huge investments in backward-looking technologies that can bankrupt communities while destroying our health and resources.

GAIA members work to shift subsidies away from wasteful incinerators and landfills, and toward real solutions.



⇒ JOBS

Alternatives to incineration and landfilling have tremendous potential for *sustainable job creation*. Internationally, informal sector recyclers play a critical role in reducing waste, and wastepicker movements are building their capacity to create safer and more sustainable livelihoods. U.S. research indicates that expanding recycling creates 10 times the number of jobs than incineration and landfilling.

GAIA and members work with wastepickers and recyclers to harness their expertise, support job creation and insure that recycling provides fair wages and safe working conditions.

⇒ Community-Based Waste Management in Indonesia Threatened

Goldman Prize winner Yuyun Ismawati of Indonesia and her organization Balifokus are known internationally for their efforts to establish a worker-owned cooperative of informal sector recyclers that creates jobs and provides dignity and economic security. Yet the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) has awarded carbon credits to an incinerator and landfill gas project that would undermine these efforts. A partial victory was achieved in 2009 when investments were stalled for the incinerator. If the project were to be implemented in full, it would not only increase GHG emissions and toxic pollution, but also displace the livelihoods of some of Bali's most vulnerable workers.

GAIA is currently involved in two major campaigns supporting action by communities and recycling workers on recycling, labor, health, and climate change:

⇒ ***A climate policy partnership with organized wastepickers.*** This collaboration engages mass movement wastepicker organizations and allies in the global climate debate, in countries including Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Argentina and India, among others. The partnership supports local and regional advocacy campaigns for policies to improve wastepicker livelihoods. Grassroots recyclers must be recognized as key players in sustainable waste solutions.

⇒ ***Recycling Works! – a U.S.-based partnership with the International Brotherhood of the Teamsters.*** This campaign brings together waste workers and community and environmental justice activists to create recycling programs that generate quality jobs with health and safety standards, combat climate change, create energy independence, and revitalize community health. The campaign also works to end subsidies for incinerators and landfills.

⇒ ABOUT GAIA

GAIA is a worldwide alliance of more than 600 grassroots organizations and individuals in 88 countries, whose ultimate vision is a just, toxic-free world without incineration. The network's two-part strategy is stopping unsustainable practices and advancing solutions. Since GAIA's founding meeting in South Africa in December 2000, we have grown to support major civil society movements on every continent. Our greatest strength lies in our membership, which includes some of the most active leaders in environmental health and justice struggles internationally. To learn more about the inspiring work of GAIA members around the world please visit our website at www.no-burn.org. You can also contact any of the offices below or email Melissa Lago at melissa@no-burn.org.



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