



G A I A 10

10 YEARS OF COMMUNITY ACTION FOR ZERO WASTE SOLUTIONS



GAIA's Mission

GAIA is a worldwide alliance of grassroots organizations, non-governmental organizations, and individuals who recognize that our planet's finite resources, fragile biosphere and the health of people and other living beings are endangered by polluting and inefficient production practices and health-threatening disposal methods.

We oppose incinerators, landfills, and other end-of-pipe interventions.

Our ultimate vision is a just, toxic-free world without incineration. Our goal is Clean Production and the creation of a closed-loop, materials-efficient economy where all products are reused, repaired or recycled back into the marketplace or nature.

Adopted in December 2000, in Johannesburg, South Africa



GAIA was launched in Johannesburg, South Africa, in December 2000. Photo by Monica Wilson

What does a decade mean? It can be just ten springs; the time that a tree takes in growing. A collection of calendars. But GAIA's ten years are a lot more than that: they represent a web of life interconnected throughout the continents, maintained at each point by hands of conviction and vocation. It's ten cycles that feed from good actions, from activism and certainty about a better future. GAIA is a very different network from many others, and that difference is in its spirit, built with solidarity, trust, affection and knowledge. It is an honor to be part of this alliance. Save GAIA! We now, and those to be born salute you!

Buján Silvana
BIOS Argentina
Member of GAIA's Steering Committee

My dearest friends, activists, researchers and fighters for a just, dignified, waste and toxics free human life and nature. For this remarkable 10 years celebration of our GAIA family I would like to thank all of you for your persistence, passion and professionalism in making these reality. GAIA as network and team has been working hard for a decade to defend people's and nature's rights to exist in a clean environment. The efforts of all of you made it happen in many places and are making it every day across the globe, and will make it happen in the future. Without the GAIA family this would've been a mission impossible. Keep the spirit and build upon what GAIA has already established. Let's wish the GAIA family long and healthy life full of challenges, successes and joyful moments. We are all part of it and shall continue to make it happen. Long live GAIA! Isang Bagsak!

Ivaylo Hlebarov
Bulgaria

It's just so great to be a member of this family. GAIA helped us a lot – with unique information, useful expertise, project support, but what is the most important – we get inspiration and motivation for our work here in Belarus. Knowing about other fellows working around the globe, sharing news and successes and challenges gives you additional power and strength in your own campaign.

I want to say thank you to everyone for really making GAIA a family of diverse people with the same values. I wish everyone to be proud of being a member of the GAIA family and continue its fight.

Eugeniy Lobanov
Center of Environmental Solutions (CES), Belarus

Over 150 years ago, the Chief Seattle, in a letter to USA President Pierce, said: ...white man contaminate their bed, and they will one night suffocate in their own waste... These words turned out to be prophetic, since this will literally be the future for millions of people as a result of the impacts of climate change, caused in turn by waste combustion. GAIA addressed this situation frontally, since it looks for alternatives to one of the most pernicious habits of human race, which is to burn goods that are supposed to be nuisances or that they do not use, and they call waste. Just like GAIA has shown in national and international forums, by burning goods we not only add more greenhouse gases but we are also destroying objects that later, to produce them back again, we will have to use energy and therefore create more greenhouse gases, apart from all the local pollution created by toxic gases. This message is being taken by many sectors that have understood that waste should not exist, since all the discards and waste have some use in the lifecycle, and therefore many communities are holding efforts to use all the discards, by reducing consumption, reusing, recycling or composting materials, looking to prevent waste generation. GAIA's effort and mission are part of a scenario of resource management for the sustainability of our civilization.

Ricardo Navarro
CESTA – FoE El Salvador
Member of GAIA's steering committee

Congratulations on 10th anniversary of Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives! I wish we all together take steps toward Zero Waste communities as a lasting partner. I am confident that we will build a Global Zero Waste Society in the near future.

Kim Mi-hwa
Korea Zero Waste Movement Network

Congratulations on these 10 years of fight and solidarity, two words that sum up a lot of your work, the fight against technologies that bring death and diseases, and solidarity to find bonds of cooperation and support to develop a political and technical critique against incineration and similar technologies, and in favor of the Zero Waste alternatives. Hugs to everyone.

Fernando Bejarano
CAATA, Mexico

As people campaigning for a better world we need to treat each other better. People oppose incineration for many reasons, and although we may have little else in common apart from wishing to stop incineration we have the opportunity to forge lasting friendships based on mutual respect. We are part of an amazing global family. UKWIN appreciates that we are all working very hard, struggling against well-resourced vested interests that care little about our planet. The stakes are high. Still, we need to make time to celebrate and enhance our sense of community and camaraderie. Campaigning against incineration and for more sustainable alternative approaches can be richly rewarding and a lot of fun! UKWIN's message to the GAIA family is: take pleasure in the struggle. Outcomes may be temporary and uncertain, but the joy and friendship we generate is forever. Don't give in to fear and despair, celebrate our collective achievements and feel the power involved in being part of something big, something global.

United Kingdom Without Incineration Network
(UKWIN)

I would like to add my congratulations to those of others celebrating GAIA's 10th year of connecting and helping communities and NGOs around the world. GAIA is a critically important component of the global movement to protect human health and the environment from the injuries and threats caused by exposure to toxic pollution. GAIA not only helps communities fight incinerators and other bad waste disposal practices, GAIA also shows a way forward by promoting zero waste and non-polluting, sustainable approaches to discard management. I value my ten year collaboration with GAIA and will continue to help you as I can in your efforts to achieve a sustainable, toxics-free future.

Jack Weinberg
USA



Values

GAIA is a worldwide alliance of grassroots groups, NGOs, public interest organizations, policy and research institutes, and individuals who work together under a shared vision of achieving a just world, without toxics, incinerators or other polluting end-of-pipe interventions.

The alliance is a vibrant community, where members support one another through email lists, access technical and other information through web pages, publications and newsletters; receive support from the GAIA coordination team and other members; get global assistance for their local campaigns, especially those geared at shutting down waste burners and implementing alternatives.

Local communities worldwide face the same threats caused by mismanagement of waste. These include incinerator proposals—many of them built by the same companies and funded by the same institutions all over the world—and other wasteful approaches to the crises created by unsustainable and toxic production and overconsumption. By being part of GAIA, members can work more effectively against these threats and for real solutions to these growing problems, reinforce each other's work and celebrate the shared, creative struggle. The diversity of GAIA's members strengthens our collective efforts and empowers innovative, practical solutions.

GAIA seeks to enhance, not replace, existing efforts against incineration and for real solutions. GAIA also provides opportunities for members to join work at an international level.

How GAIA works

- We work to build a broad-based movement, not a top-heavy, centralized organization.
- We enhance current work by members, but don't try to replace it.
- We want our alliance to be decentralized—both in structure and in solutions.
- We focus resources on the work and projects that have community energy behind them.
- We maintain a minimal structure necessary to facilitate the work.
- We respect local wisdom.
- We strive for consensus while recognizing other decision-making processes are sometimes appropriate.
- We acknowledge and celebrate that our diversity is our strength.
- We prioritize community control over corporate control.
- We seek to maintain flexibility, recognizing that GAIA is a work in progress, enabling us to continually revisit and revise to meet current needs and opportunities.

GAIA members include anti-incineration campaigners and national networks; environmental health and toxics advocates and researchers; workers' organizations; scientists and doctors; writers and media activists; recycling, composting, and zero waste advocates and practitioners; and ordinary people worried about the world we will leave to the next generation.

Right now, GAIA members are engaged in myriad critical activities—promoting local Zero Waste plans in their communities; stopping incinerators and landfills; advocating for Clean Production and policies to reduce the use of toxic materials; implementing composting programs in their workplaces, schools, universities or communities (and definitely composting at home!); researching the environmental threats posed by incinerators and landfills; conducting campaigns to take consumption to sustainable levels; and so much more!

This diversity makes GAIA a unique gathering of creativity, strength and hope. GAIA is especially pleased to count more than a dozen Goldman Environmental Prize winners among our founders and members, and many others who have received local and international recognition for their work.

GAIA's networking role

- We unite efforts against the problem and for solutions.
- We harness our collective strength.
- We show local leaders that the world is watching.
- We magnify member voices and bring in new constituencies.
- We increase our capacity to make political change.
- We demonstrate that we have international support for our position.

GAIA values information

- We develop new research on waste and related issues.
- We share and incorporate resources and information from a variety of sources.
- We document successful strategies and solutions from all parts of the world.
- We increase community access to technical/scientific information.

GAIA values community building and solidarity

- GAIA members provide moral support to one another.
- GAIA members bring international pressure to bear on local struggles.
- International collaboration helps ensure that one community's victory doesn't simply move the threat to another community.
- GAIA demonstrates the values we want to see in the world through the way our alliance works.
- GAIA members help one another to remember to have fun, work together, and lighten the load we bear in these struggles for a better world.



Groups in Spain preparing anti-incinerator protest. Photo by Plataforma Antiincineradora de la Vall del Ges



Members from around the world convene during the 2007 GAIA Global Meeting in Hondarribia. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA



GAIA meeting in Africa. Photo by JA!



GAIA members having fun during the 2007 GAIA Global Meeting in Hondarribia, Spain. Photo by Gigie Cruz/ GAIA

GAIA: The First Decade of Vision and Action

The idea for GAIA emerged during an international training on Clean Production, held at the Toxics Use Reduction Institute, University of Massachusetts at Lowell in 2000. At the training, activists from all over the world who were already working on environmental health and justice issues discussed how they were encountering a flood of incinerator proposals, which were an immediate and significant health threat in their communities and a major obstacle to resource conservation, clean production, sustainable economic development, and environmental health and justice.

These activists recognized the potential power that could come from working together to challenge the rise of incineration and to promote viable alternatives for all kinds of waste. From this conjunction of issues grew GAIA's dual mission and dual name: Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance and Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives. At the same time, the participants at Lowell recognized that there were many relevant groups and activists who were not present, and agreed to consult in their regions about the need for a new global alliance. In subsequent months, it became clear that many other activists and communities were concerned about these issues, and saw great potential value in a new opportunity to work together. Indeed, a few months later, activists from across the Asia-Pacific region met in Bangkok to discuss the same challenges—new incinerator proposals were flooding the region. They decided to form a new network, Waste Not Asia, to battle the incinerator industry and work towards

environmentally just waste solutions. Waste Not Asia later decided to become the Asia-Pacific regional arm of GAIA.

GAIA was born out of a need to organize against incineration and in a spirit of great collaboration, especially in partnership with two other anti-toxics networks—Health Care Without Harm and the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN)—to which many early GAIA members also belonged. Along with those networks, many Greenpeace members and groups were also deeply involved. GAIA was formally launched in December of 2000 with the participation of more than 75 people from 23 countries, during negotiations in South Africa for what would become the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). IPEN helped to bring together many civil society groups for these negotiations, creating an opportunity to launch this new alliance.



GAIA was first conceived in a Clean Production training in Massachusetts. Photo courtesy of Cathy Crumbley

“GAIA is a venue where we celebrate our community of activists, of creative people fighting for real and genuine solutions. Where one victory in one community is a validation of the struggle that is happening at the other side of the planet.”

— Von Hernandez
GAIA founder & Steering Committee member

GAIA members wanted to work on waste issues from a different and broader perspective—tackling both production and consumption issues, basing solutions on local knowledge and respect for the environment and people, and amplifying people's voices. As the following pages illustrate, GAIA's approach has helped members to achieve critical victories.

In our first decade, GAIA members and allies together have defeated more than 150 existing and proposed incinerators in 25 countries around the world. Communities keep banding together to say no to toxic air and groundwater pollution and to burning valuable resources that could be recycled, composted, and re-used.



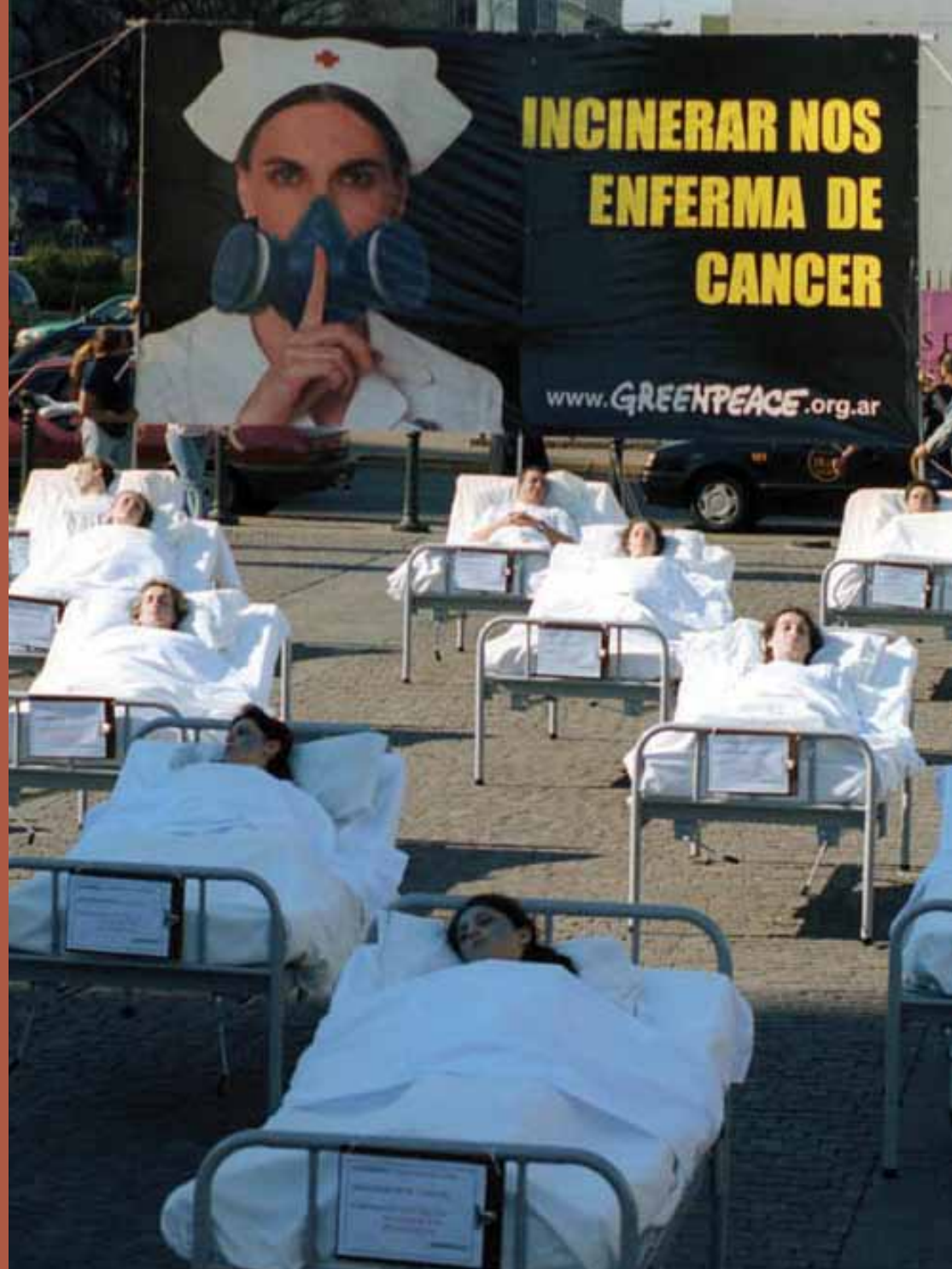
Villagers from Kamikatsu village recycle their discards at the village recycling centre. Kamikatsu declares its intention to be a "zero waste" village by 2020, Shikoku, Japan. Photo by Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert/Greenpeace



People unveil lies of incinerator industry in Belledune, Canada. Photo courtesy of "Return to Sender Coalition"



Protest against a municipal solid waste incinerator in the Basque Country. Photo by Ekologistak Martxan



Demonstration in Buenos Aires to pass an incinerator ban. Photo courtesy of Greenpeace Argentina



Stop Toxic Debt. Environmental groups call for the cancellation of the loan made by the Philippines for 26 incinerators from Austria. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA



Zero Waste Kovalam project, India. Photo by Thanal

GAIA has also always worked to offer real alternatives to waste incineration. GAIA has been part of a global conversation that has promoted a shift from the approach that considers waste as a mere technical and “end-of-the-pipe” problem, to one that understands that waste is part of a large system that has to do with inequity, overconsumption, toxic and unsustainable production, weak democracy, and distorted values. GAIA founder Annie Leonard’s online film, “The Story of Stuff,” has helped GAIA members raise awareness of how waste is the result of choosing an unsustainable materials economy. GAIA’s role as a diverse global alliance has enabled us to reach out to and across different movements and bring different voices into the conversation. As a result of this gradual shift in the understanding of waste and consumption, cities, states, regions, and provinces have increasingly begun to adopt zero waste principles and/or legislation, including communities in Argentina, Australia, Canada, England, India, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, and the United States. GAIA members have also been key in promoting and monitoring other protective legislation, such as bans on plastics and toxic materials, as well as incinerator moratoria.

Our successes have demonstrated the power of grassroots communities, backed by good science, to advocate for safe, economically just, and feasible solutions.



Gedebage Residents protest the Waste-to-Energy plant to be constructed adjacent to their community in Bandung, Indonesia. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA



Environmental groups protest in front of the Japanese Embassy in Manila calling for both the Philippine and the Japanese governments not to sign the Japan–Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA



Wastepickers and allied groups march during the 2009 UNFCCC meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark. Photo by Dave Ciple/GAIA

We have worked closely with partners to develop innovative zero waste model city projects in Kovalam, India and Alaminos City, Philippines. The Zero Waste Kovalam project has begun to scale up this success through new policies in its home state of Kerala in 2008, as well as documentation of the model by the UN Development Program for other tourist cities. GAIA members have also actively promoted better strategies for medical and industrial waste that have been developed by allies and members.

Working closely with allies in other international networks, GAIA has been active in tracking and intervening in key international treaties addressing toxics, such as the Stockholm Convention, the Basel Convention on transboundary movement of hazardous wastes, and the European Waste Framework Directive, to make sure grassroots voices are heard and to advocate for effective implementation on a local basis. We have welcomed the opportunity to partner with other networks and alliances in dynamic regional and global campaigns. GAIA members have also supported one another in international campaigns to stop toxic waste trafficking.

GAIA organized global meetings in Malaysia in 2003 and the Basque region of Spain in 2007. We have supported four Waste Not Asia strategy sessions, regional meetings in Latin America, Europe, North America, and Africa, and nine Global Days of Action. We have also hosted several Zero Waste Fellowships, and at one time provided minigrants that assisted member projects. When we bring the rich diversity and practical experience of our members together, we strengthen a dynamic movement for real change.

In 2009, we launched a major new collaboration at the intersection of waste, climate change, and livelihoods. In partnership with organized waste pickers—local frontline recyclers—from Latin America and Asia, GAIA has worked with allies including WIEGO, la Red Latinoamericana de Recicladores, and the Alliance of Indian Wastepickers to bring the waste sector and the role of informal recyclers into the global climate change debates of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Through consistent interventions at negotiating sessions throughout 2009 and 2010, this collaboration shifted the terms of the conversation globally and challenged the investments of the Clean Development Mechanism in incineration.

Since incineration has become a major issue in China, GAIA has partnered with Green Anhui and Wuhu Ecology Center since 2009 to create the China Waste Information Network (CWIN). This network is specifically designed to promote information sharing with and within China, and also involves key advisors and research partners such as Green Beagle and Friends of Nature. CWIN has engaged in networking, developed reports, and established a growing Chinese—language list serve.

Our successes have demonstrated the power of grassroots communities, backed by good science, to advocate for safe, economically just, and feasible solutions. We are growing in numbers, diversity, and strength every day, with more than 650 members in more than 90 countries, working on the various aspects of the production and consumption system to build a future free from the inequities and the toxic, economic, and social burdens of waste.

The pages that follow offer a sort of scrapbook of this exciting decade for the GAIA family—sharing glimpses of some of the many struggles and victories of our members, and of the diversity and creativity of our many approaches for positive change.

As GAIA enters our second decade, we look forward to tackling the challenges ahead, confident of having built a strong support network to ensure victories. Our increasing ties with workers and our focus on the people handling waste is an important component of creating new materials management systems that meet all our values. And yet success brings its own challenges: in ten years, Zero Waste has moved from the realm of visionary idealism to a serious policy goal; but waste companies are increasingly trying to co-opt the term and the concept for practices that encourage waste disposal and destruction. At the same time, most societies are seeing absolute increases in waste generation and more reliance on disposable goods, indicating how far we have to go to truly achieve Zero Waste. The climate crisis has forced an unprecedented number of people around the world to recognize that our planet's resources and ability to absorb pollution are indeed limited, and fundamental system change is needed. GAIA intends to be at the forefront of that change.

Stopping Incinerators: Because no community is disposable

Burning waste—whether in open fires, cement kilns, or using technologies with fancy names like pyrolysis and gasification—is both hazardous and unsustainable. Incinerators destroy resources, contribute to climate change, and pollute air and water—releasing some of the most toxic chemicals known on the planet. And the fancier the technology, the more money communities spend to poison their environment and their own bodies, and to waste other resources they could use.

Incinerators don't solve our waste problem—they only hide the evidence of our unsustainable choices.

GAIA members worldwide—many living next to incinerator plants—reveal the problem by showing how these “magical” approaches to waste management are actually poisoning our bodies and undermining the strategies that address the root problem of unsustainable production and consumption. GAIA members around the world choose to resist incineration

with moral force and creative action, to look at our unsustainable materials economy with fresh eyes, and to advocate for better solutions.

And again and again—more than 150 times in the past decade—GAIA members and allies have won.

We succeed because we work together. Throughout this decade, GAIA members worldwide have prevented incinerators in their communities, and have truly advanced our common knowledge of the impact of waste incineration. As we say in GAIA, a victory in one community is a victory of the entire community, and reinforces the other struggles taking place.

Incinerators don't solve our waste problem—they only hide the evidence of our unsustainable choices.

CANADA AND USA



CANADA

In 2003, communities and environmentalists from Environnement Vie Coalition Retour à l'expéditeur and Citizens Against Bennett in Belledune, Canada protested against the proposed incineration project by Bennett Environmental. *Photo: Simon Bujold*



UNITED STATES

In June 2010, GAIA helped local activists from the Zero Waste Detroit coalition bring together thousands of labor and environmental justice advocates who were present for the U.S. Social Forum to march in solidarity with local community members to challenge the Detroit incinerator—one of the world's largest waste incinerators which has plagued the community with toxic pollution, health problems, and high costs. *Photo: Lowell Boileau, www.DetroitYES.com*



Following our 2007 Stop Incinerators network meeting, GAIA participated in a protest outside the incinerator in Hartford, Connecticut. The meeting drew activists from across the U.S. and from Canada. GAIA's Stop Incinerators network has grown to more than 200 members and we are excited to work with many strong advocates.



Countries with
GAIA Members

LATIN AMERICA



MEXICO

In an example of cross-continental solidarity, Mexican members and allies were able to stop the construction of 4 gasification plants in Acapulco, Mexico, in 2004, with support from other GAIA members and allies. The incinerator proposal in Mexico—which was promoted by a failed company from Germany—was stopped with grassroots mobilization and an extensive presentation of the company's poor track record with an incinerator in Germany. The photo shows Greenpeace activists collecting signatures against incineration in front of the National Art Museum. *Photo by Tomas Bravo/ Greenpeace Mexico*



EUROPE



In Europe, a continent that has the image of having embraced incineration, communities in Italy, France, Spain, UK, Belarus, Ireland, Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Croatia have defeated dozens of incinerator plants. Even in countries like Norway, Germany, Belgium and Austria—which are often seen as more pro-incinerator—communities have mobilized against incinerators and for safer and sustainable alternatives. Powerful movements have emerged from anti-incinerator fights, like Centre National d'Information Indépendante sur les Déchets, UK Without Incineration Network, Rete Nazionale de Rifiuti Zero (Zero Waste Italy).

Some European groups and struggles go back to before the formation of GAIA. For example, the Pietrasanta incinerator struggle in the province of Lucca, Italy began with regional government planning in 1996 and ended after years of intermittent closures with the seizure and permanent shut-down of the incinerator in 2010 by public officials. Also in 2010, GAIA collaborated in the largest anti-incinerator demonstration ever in Italy, in Parma.



ASIA AND PACIFIC



In Malaysia, we supported a successful campaign to stop the monstrous Broga municipal waste incinerator from being built, after a six-year campaign that involved 70% of local residents, a four-year legal battle, 150 grassroots organizing actions, and a great deal of global solidarity. Victory was finally secured in 2007.

Greenpeace activists show opposition against a proposed incinerator in Thailand. *Photo courtesy of Greenpeace*

ARGENTINA

Grassroots mobilizing with the support of other groups prevented dozens of incinerators in Argentina, through the combined work of the local groups, Coalición Ciudadana Anti-Incineración. GAIA and other allies. In 2008–2009, opposition came together around a medical waste incinerator that was going to be built in the rural town of Puan. The combination of commitment, creativity and persistence from local groups, and the moral and technical support from allies, made this and many victories possible. *Photo: Mesa Amplia contra el Incinerador de Marcos Paz*



AFRICA



SOUTH AFRICA

GAIA was part of a broad coalition of public interest groups, including the Sasolburg Environmental Committee, groundWork, and Earthlife Africa, who worked together to defeat plans for a huge hazardous waste incinerator in the township of Sasolburg, South Africa in 2002—one of our first major victories! GAIA also partnered to battle subsequent incinerators in Durban.



MAURITIUS

GAIA has worked with member scientists to provide technical assistance and expert testimony to the local coalition of residents' associations, non-governmental organizations, and individuals in Mauritius who are challenging what would be the first municipal solid waste incinerator in Africa. *Photo by Collectif des Opposants à l'Incineration de Déchets*

Zero Waste: Turning throwaway societies into sustainable communities

Zero Waste is a goal and an action plan that seeks to avoid all solid waste by using resources more efficiently to avoid wasting, and implementing programs and policies which ensure that all discarded materials are safely and sustainably returned to nature or manufacturing through re-use, recycling or composting. Zero Waste also strives to reduce the toxicity of products and manufacturing processes, reduce waste at source, maintain a sustainable level of consumption and redesign products to allow for easy and safe reuse.

Cities and communities around the world are increasingly taking up the zero waste challenge and demonstrating the possibility of reducing waste and hitting impressive recycling and composting targets—benefitting workers, the climate, and public health. GAIA supports the sharing of best practices and the development and implementation of good zero waste policies for both urban and rural communities.

Goals Worth Pursuing and Models that Work

Worldwide, well over a hundred local governments have adopted zero waste goals. They include cities, states, regions, and provinces in countries such as Argentina, Australia, Canada, England, India, Italy,

Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, and the U.S. Zero waste strategies are localized and diverse, and many GAIA members work tirelessly for implementation of city-scale practices that make these goals feasible.

In the global north, GAIA has worked to share models from: the City of San Francisco—for successful large-scale composting in the USA and effective door-to-door collection from apartment buildings and businesses; cities in the Basque Country of Spain such as Hernani and Usurbil—where the implementation of door-to-door collection and composting resulted in a 75% recycling rate within six months; and cities in Italy such as Capannori, where community leaders are working with a local university to reduce waste by working with manufacturers on product redesign for hard-to-recycle discards.



Women's cooperatives make products out of discards in Kovalam. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA

In the global south, the Zero Waste Kovalam project of Thanal, launched in India with GAIA's support in December 2000, laid the groundwork for the state of Kerala, with a population of 30 million, to adopt Zero Waste goals as part of its statewide waste management strategy. The Kovalam project was also documented by the UN Development Program as a model for other tourist communities.

Building on lessons learned from Kovalam, GAIA partnered in 2009 with Alaminos City in the Philippines—an area that includes 39 barangays (villages) and the beautiful Hundred Islands National Park—to look at the local waste problem from every angle and work with community leaders on a multifaceted program. Materials Recycling Facilities have been set up to enable local recycling instead of sending discards to an open dump, and the city's vermicompost program for organic waste was strengthened and made more sustainable.



Activists hold a banner urging the European parliament to prioritize recycling during the 1st reading of the Waste Framework Directive at Strasbourg, France in February 2007. Photo by Friends of the Earth Europe



GAIA and our members have also participated in zero waste demonstration projects in public events, like the Earth Summit II, the World Meeting of Families, Southeast Asian Games, the World Cup South Korea, showing how Zero Waste works in practice. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA



The Buenos Aires city council passed the Zero Waste law in November 2005. Photo by Greenpeace Argentina

Supporting Policies and Practices that Engage Grassroots Recyclers

GAIA supports advocacy for formal zero waste policies where such are possible. For example, we helped to lead a campaign with Greenpeace Argentina, waste picker cooperatives, and other local organizations, to encourage the Buenos Aires City Council to unanimously pass zero waste legislation. While implementation of the policy has been hampered by a lack of political will and real investment in solutions, this policy opened the door for critical gains in the inclusion of “cartoneros” or grassroots recyclers and strengthened the movement against incineration. This law was the first piece of zero waste legislation in Latin America.

GAIA also appreciates and promotes urban efforts in India, and celebrates the early and on-going work of GAIA members Chintan in Delhi and KKP KP in Pune. KKP KP, for example, works to secure the livelihoods of waste pickers by helping to organize a waste picker cooperative of more than 1,800 workers and providing opportunities for greater recognition and protection for at least 5,000 additional women recyclers who do not participate in the cooperative. KKP KP’s model offers a strategy that simultaneously empowers poor women and addresses city-scale waste issues in environmentally sound ways. The SWaCH cooperative now serves over 300,000 households across 14 municipal wards and the number is growing.

If you're not
for Zero Waste,
how much waste
are you for?

Building Zero Waste Movements

GAIA members—including the South Korean Zero Waste Movement, HuMuSz, GRRN, ILSR, Zelena Akcija, ExNora, Misión Industrial, CEPA, Ecologistas en Acción, and Envision New Zealand—continue to encourage and support the adoption of zero waste approaches in waste management in many countries. The opportunity to share experiences and ideas for advancing zero waste policies and practices through the GAIA network and other networks has been important for activists in India, Lebanon, Mexico, and the Philippines, among others.

GAIA is also excited to be a founding member and core part of Zero Waste Europe, established in 2009, which brings together municipalities, companies, universities, and organizations committed to working toward eliminating waste in Europe. With active zero waste groups or communities in Catalonia (Spain), Italy, Hungary, Slovakia, and the UK, advocates are building valuable experience and knowledge about what it takes to put Zero Waste into practice.



Environmental Justice advocates push for waste reduction and recycling over burning of waste in Detroit. Photo by Dave Ciple/GAIA



High school students from Ramon Magsaysay High School in Cubao join Miss Earth beauties in pushing for Zero Waste to prevent climate change. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA



Environmental activists join a march calling for a Zero Waste Campania in Italy. Photo by Ambiente e Futuro



1. GAIA Members hold a reusable bag campaign in a local supermarket as part of the 2006 Global Day of Action against Waste and Incineration. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA



2. Environmental activists hold protest in front of the Department of Health calling for the strict implementation of the Clean Air Act banning medical waste incineration during the 2002 Global Day of Action against Waste and Incineration. Photo by Jimmy Domingo/Greenpeace



3. Biodegradable wastes are being placed into a compost pit by women wastepickers of Parisar Vikas in a housing complex in Mumbai, India. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA



Filipina Actress Chinchin Gutierrez joins environmental groups in a public awareness activity encouraging the public to “Go Zero Waste for Zero Warming.” Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA

Zero Waste for Zero Warming: Because Waste Matters in the Struggle to Slow Climate Change

Climate change—a critical issue for planetary survival—demands that we put an end to the wasteful systems that have gotten us into this mess in the first place. GAIA launched our Zero Waste for Zero Warming campaign in 2007 to build public understanding of the connection between waste and climate change, strengthen community-driven movements that challenge the wasting and warming cycle, and fight to ensure that no more public resources are spent trashing the climate. The campaign is guided by the “New School” 3Rs—Resist, Reinvest, and Redesign.

Rethinking Waste Before It's Waste

Some of the most important zero waste initiatives begin upstream, with clean production, extended producer responsibility policies, and campaigns to change the stuff we use and how we use it. We need a systems redesign mirroring nature’s cycles, where everything is made to be returned to the earth or reused for future generations. GAIA’s diverse members and allies are collectively pursuing and sharing multiple strategies. Below are a few model projects with replication potential:

Organics Returned to the Soil—Organic discards (such as food scraps and garden waste) are a significant portion of municipal waste streams. Developing effective separation of organics for composting and/or biogas systems is critical. Stree Mukti

Sanghathana in Mumbai, India, has a strong track record of training women waste pickers to set up zero waste systems that use organics to create high-quality compost and biogas fuel—improving the women’s lives and creating multiple environmental benefits. Other GAIA members with successful organics strategies include Mother Earth Foundation, which has a community compost program; HuMuSz in Hungary, which promotes home composting; and Desarrollo Integral Autogestionario in Mexico, which promotes composting at schools as part of zero waste education.

Plastic Bag Bans—Throw-away plastic sacks are a small wasteful habit with enormous consequences—creating litter that clogs storm drains, infiltrates waterways, and threatens wildlife. A number of communities have successfully banned plastic bags, and GAIA encourages members to participate in

International Plastic Bag-Free Day, organized by the Fundació Prevenció de Residus i Consum, to promote this simple step.

Safe Medical Waste Management—GAIA has partnered with Health Care Without Harm to promote safer medical waste strategies based on green purchasing, resource recovery, minimization of infectious/hazardous waste and non-incineration treatment. We also supported the work of Global Environment Facility projects in medical waste in Argentina and the Philippines to demonstrate practices that avoid mercury and dioxin emissions.

Clean Production—Some waste can best be stopped by redesigning products so that they contain fewer (or no) toxics; are easier to repair than discard; disassemble easily to facilitate recycling or reuse of components; and/or are compostable. Clean Production Action in the U.S. and ISTAS in Spain are working toward this.

Work at the Intersections of Waste, Livelihoods & Climate

Waste is critically connected to issues of economic justice and livelihoods. Approximately 1% of the developing world's urban population lives by informal recycling, often in dangerous conditions with little recognition or respect. Recognizing and integrating informal recyclers into formal city services, with fair wages and safer conditions, provides substantial health, environmental, and social benefits. Similarly, in industrialized countries, recycling, composting, and related industries have the potential to create many more jobs per ton of waste than incineration or landfilling. With the right measures in place, GAIA sees significant potential for the creation of quality green jobs by expanding recycling.

Many GAIA groups have long histories of working with waste pickers or grassroots recyclers (as they variously describe themselves in different communities) because of the critical role they often play in local resource recovery, and because of our values regarding the relationship of waste and livelihoods. In recent years—and mobilized by members who have been actively engaged in joint campaigns with this sector—GAIA's focus on waste, livelihoods, and the impact of climate finance has been sharply accentuated.

In 2009, as global climate negotiations gained momentum, GAIA launched a new collaboration with organized waste picker/grassroots recycling organizations, primarily

from Asia and Latin America, to ensure that these critical frontline recyclers have an ongoing voice in UN climate change negotiations. The waste sector is an important arena for greenhouse gas reduction, but CDM carbon credits and global climate investments have often gone to large, costly incinerator and landfill gas projects that actually increase greenhouse gas emissions while threatening the livelihoods of those who work to recover local waste. GAIA and our partners have advocated instead for investment in local recycling that builds on local workers' expertise. Now elevated to the global level, the powerful voices of these recycling leaders have begun to change the conversation at the UN through participation in meetings in Bonn, Copenhagen, Tianjin, and Cancun.



Waste picker representatives attend the UNFCCC meeting in Tianjin, China to call for recognition for their important contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through recycling. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA



Waste picker representatives and allies speak before a press conference during the UNFCCC meeting in Tianjin China. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA



A Chinese waste picker classifies paper according to its type prior to recycling. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA



In 2009, GAIA worked with filmmaker Mai Iskandar to promote screenings of Garbage Dreams, a documentary featuring the efforts of one of GAIA's members working with the Zaballeen (Cairo's traditional garbage collectors and recyclers), which has won praise and recognition at film festivals around the world.

GAIA did outreach in 2010 for the Oscar-nominated film Waste Land, in which acclaimed artist Vik Muniz journeyed from his home base in Brooklyn to Rio de Janeiro's Jardim Gramacho, the world's largest garbage dump. There he photographed an eclectic band of "catadores"—self-designated pickers of recyclable materials—and together they make larger than life self-portraits out of the material they collect.



*March demanding for inclusion of informal recyclers in Bogota, Colombia, October 2010.
Photo by Lucia Fernandez*

Our partners in these delegations included mass movement waste picker associations, including members of the Latin American and Caribbean Recyclers Network, the Alliance of Indian Waste Pickers, and the South Africa Waste Picker Alliance, as well as our sister network WIEGO (a global action-research-policy group that seeks to improve the status of the working poor).

Other GAIA members and NGO partners are also involved in this effort. This coalition has played a vital role in raising the profile of the waste sector and in lifting the voice of street recyclers and allied environmentalists within the global climate negotiations. Together, we have pushed the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) to re-examine its methodologies for key waste sector investments.

We had the honor of addressing the first “Expo-catadores” (waste picker expo), an event organized by the Brazilian Waste Pickers Movement (MNCR) that brought together more than 3,000 people—including President Lula da Silva—to bear witness to the fact that the informal recycling sector is at the frontline of the struggle for a sustainable and just waste management, as well as climate justice. This sector is increasingly fighting incinerator proposals that pose a lethal threat to their livelihoods, and GAIA has been providing technical support to those struggles. We have also supported member work in countries including Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Egypt, Mexico, South Africa, and Cambodia that oppose incineration and advocate for public policies and tools to promote just and sustainable waste solutions that support the economic, social, and environmental inclusion of waste pickers and communities.

In the U.S., GAIA launched Recycling Works! in 2009 in partnership with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which represents the majority of unionized waste and recycling workers in the U.S. This campaign is designed to leverage the combined knowledge and power of environmental justice activists and organized labor to advocate for federal and state policies and local government decisions that will increase the national recycling rate in the U.S.—with a goal of creating green jobs and bringing health and climate benefits. The campaign includes urgently-needed research, policy advocacy and city-based projects to dramatically increase recycling rates. GAIA has also supported members—and where possible leveraged new partnerships with organized labor—in state-level policy work on incinerator moratoria, zero waste and recycling goals, and efforts to ensure that incinerators do not benefit from inclusion in renewable energy definitions.



Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA

Trainings, Skillshares & Networking

At the heart of GAIA's method is bringing community leaders and activists together at national, regional, and global levels to share knowledge, experience, and skills, through trainings, fellowships, tours, seminars, workshops, conferences, and skillshares. *Photos taken by GAIA members and staff.*





GAIA Timeline

1999

- Pre-GAIA outreach to communities facing incineration threats in Africa (Mozambique, South Africa), Asia (India, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand) and Latin America (Guatemala, Mexico)
- Philippines became first country to ban waste incineration

2000

- Anti-incineration activists gathered at a clean production training in the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production put forward the idea of forming GAIA
- 1st Waste Not Asia meeting held in Bangkok, idea for “Zero Waste Kovalam” raised
- Collapse of a wall of garbage at Payatas dumpsite, Philippines, killing hundreds of residents including waste pickers, accelerated passage of Republic Act 9003, the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act
- GAIA founding and planning meeting held outside Johannesburg, South Africa

2001

- GAIA Secretariat established in Manila
- Thanal launched Zero Waste Kovalam project in India with support from GAIA and Greenpeace
- GAIA facilitated seed grants to support grassroots organizing efforts around waste and incineration
- GAIA launched its first global campaign to stop World Bank from funding incinerators
- Campaign to stop use of toxic materials in International Finance Corporation projects (win: no PVC use policy)
- Medical waste skillshare in health care projects with Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) in Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) signed, implicating incinerators in the formation of dioxins and furans
- First National Waste Summit in South Africa adopted Polokwane Declaration, which sets the following as goal: “Reduce waste generation and disposal by 50% and 25% respectively by 2012 and develop a plan for Zero Waste by 2022”
- 2nd Waste Not Asia meeting held in Taipei, Taiwan

2002

- GAIA organized first Global Day of Action against Waste and Incineration
- GAIA’s Spanish-speaking node launched
- Earthlife Africa, in collaboration with GAIA and other partners, implemented a Zero Waste program at the Civil Society Forum of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg
- GAIA organized an International Zero Waste Skillshare in San Francisco Bay Area, USA, with participants from India, Philippines and South Africa
- groundWork, in collaboration with GAIA and HCWH, organized a civil society workshop that resulted in the Isipingo Declaration on eliminating the harmful impact of health care waste and incinerators in Southern Africa
- GAIA and Greenpeace organized a Clean Production Skillshare in Thailand
- In Argentina, incinerator bans are established in the cities of Buenos Aires, Villa Constitución, Casilda, Coronel Bogado and Capitán Bermúdez in Santa Fe province; Marcos Juárez in Córdoba province; and Palpalá in Jujuy province.
- New GAIA report: *Bankrolling Polluting Technology: The World Bank Group and Incineration*

2003

- GAIA Global Meeting, hosted by the Consumers’ Association in Penang, held in Penang, Malaysia, as US bombed Iraq
- GAIA Secretariat staff and members of the EcoWaste Coalition demonstrated a successful waste reduction strategy at the Catholic Church’s World Meeting of Families in Rizal Park, Manila, attended by 4 million people
- GAIA with member groups in India organized a waste reduction project at the Asia Social Forum in Hyderabad
- Incinerator bans in Granadero Baigorria, Santa Fe province, and Tres Arroyos, Buenos Aires province, Argentina
- GAIA publishes *Waste Incineration: A Dying Technology*
- Von Hernandez, then GAIA’s International Co-Coordinator, wins the Goldman Environmental Prize for anti incinerator work

2004

- GAIA launched Tsunami Relief and Rebuilding Fund for members in Indonesia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka
- Second International Zero Waste Skillshare held in San Francisco Bay Area, USA, with participants from Japan, Puerto Rico, and UK
- 3rd Waste Not Asia meeting held in Seoul, South Korea
- GAIA members prevented transportation of chemical waste from São Paulo to Bahia for incineration
- Argentine cities of Esquel (Chubut), Villa Nueva and Villa Allende (Córdoba), Crespo (Entre Ríos) and Totoras (Santa Fe) issue incinerator bans
- Stockholm Convention on POPs enters into force
- New GAIA report: *Resources Up in Flames (English and Spanish)*

2005

- Many GAIA members work on Stockholm Convention national implementation plans
- GAIA joined IPEN Global Egg Sampling Project that looked at the contamination of food supply with dioxins, furans, polychlorinated biphenyls, and hexachlorobenzene.
- With support from GAIA and Greenpeace, Buenos Aires, Argentina, became the first city in Latin America to adopt a zero waste strategy through a new law
- Zero Waste advocates organized waste reduction strategy at the 23rd Southeast Asian Games in the Philippines.
- Philippines Department of Tourism adopted Zero Waste Policy, a result of a speaking tour by Jayakumar Chelaton of Thanal
- Incinerator bans issued in Rosario (Santa Fe) and Ushuaia, Tolhuin and Río Grande (Tierra del Fuego), Argentina
- Asia-Pacific meeting of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) in Bangkok included Zero Waste activities in the Global Plan of Action

2006

- European Waste Framework Directive campaign launched
- Seminar on zero waste in Buenos Aires, including government representatives and consultants from U.S. and New Zealand
- Seminar on POPs co-organized by the chemicals working group of the Brazilian Environmental Justice Network, IPEN, and GAIA
- Workshop on cement kilns in Rio de Janeiro, co-coordinated by ACPO-BEJN-Fiocruz, GAIA, and others
- SAICM High Level Declaration, Overarching Policy Strategy and Global Plan of Action adopted in Dubai
- Junk JPEPA (Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement) campaign kicked off



2007

- GAIA Global Meeting in Hondarribia, Basque Region of Spain, hosted by Ekologistak Martxan
- 1st U.S. Stop Incinerators meeting, Hartford, Connecticut, USA
- 4th Waste Not Asia meeting held in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India
- Zero Waste forum in Cuautla, Morelos, México, co-organized by GAIA, CAATA, Acción Ecológica de Morelos and Desarrollo Integral Autogestionario
- Capannori, Italy became the 1st European city to formally adopt a zero waste strategy
- Brazil won dispute with Europe at the World Trade Organization, protecting its right to ban the import of tires for incineration for environmental and human health reasons
- New Hampshire and Athens (Maine), USA, ban incineration of construction and demolition waste
- GAIA in the U.S. launched climate and waste campaign, to stop false solutions such as waste-to-energy incineration and landfilling
- Side agreement excluding trade in toxic waste appended to JPEPA
- “*Story of Stuff*” film launched by GAIA founder Annie Leonard

2008

- Zero Waste Kerala (India) policy adopted and UNDP-India adopted Zero Waste Kovalam model
- GAIA fought a major battle to prevent the weakening of the Waste Framework Directive in conjunction with the European Environmental Bureau, Health Care Without Harm, and Friends of the Earth/CEE Bankwatch, coordinating multi-country delegations to visit with European policy-makers, as well as mobilizing comments from over 1,200 constituents
- Four-year UN-backed demonstration project for the destruction of polychlorinated biphenyls using a non-combustion technology began in the Philippines, with the participation of GAIA, EcoWaste Coalition, Greenpeace and other groups
- State incineration bans passed in Hidalgo, San Luis Potosi, Zacatecas, and Quintana Roo, Mexico
- GAIA participates in our first United Nations climate change conference in Poznan, Poland to raise awareness about Zero Waste for Zero Warming
- Zero Waste Study Tour in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, India, and “Waste-to-Energy” meeting held for members in India
- Worked with the National Toxic Network in Australia to stop the export of hexachlorobenzene stockpiles for incineration in Germany 2008
- The year of regional meetings! 1st Africa Regional Meeting held in Durban, South Africa; 1st Latin American meeting of GAIA in Cuernavaca, Morelos, México; 1st European Regional Meeting and advocacy training in Brussels, Belgium
- *Stop Trashing the Climate* (with Eco-Cycle & ILSR), and other resources released this year
- *Zero Waste For Zero Warming (ZW4ZW): GAIA’s statement of concern on waste & climate*
- New GAIA report: *Incinerators Trash Community Health*
- groundWork launches a new web site for GAIA members on the problems with cement kiln incineration

2009

- Launch of Zero Waste Alaminos City Project in the Philippines
- Rosario and La Plata, Argentina pass zero waste legislation
- Global Alliance of Wastepickers/Recyclers and Allies launches international policy work on climate change and sends delegations to UNFCCC negotiations in Bonn, Germany, Copenhagen, Denmark, and Bangkok, Thailand
- Launched China Waste Information Network (CWIN)
- States of Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí, Quintana Roo and Hidalgo (Mexico) and province of Santa Fe (Argentina) ban municipal solid waste incineration. Massachusetts, USA, prevents repeal of incinerator moratorium
- GAIA worked with key allies to prevent the EU from weakening emissions regulations during its revision of the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Directive and toward a new Biowaste Directive in Europe
- Recycling Works! Campaign in the U.S. launched in partnership with International Brotherhood of Teamsters
- Zero Waste Communities: A U.S. and Canada Conference organized with Zero Waste Detroit
- GAIA and allies organized public briefings in Madrid, Spain; Krakow, Poland; and Naples, Italy regarding national implementation of the EU’s Waste Framework Directive (WFD), and a 1,000+-person march in favor of zero waste
- Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand in preparation for the first Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC1) for a globally-binding treaty on mercury
- Yuyun Ismawati of Indonesia wins the Goldman Environmental Prize for her work on waste
- *Mercury Rising: Reducing Global Emissions from Burning Mercury-Added Products* (authored by the Mercury Policy Project and co-released by the Zero Mercury Working Group, GAIA, and Ban Toxics!)
- New GAIA report: *An Industry Blowing Smoke*
- Launch of Spanish-dubbed version of “*The Story of Stuff*”

2010

- GAIA opened a regional office in India
- GAIA helped to organize a 10,000-person anti-incinerator demonstration with local allies in Parma, Italy
- “Clean Air, Good Jobs, and Justice for All”—U.S. Social Forum action against the Detroit incinerator
- GAIA participated in Climate meetings in Cancún, Mexico, Bonn, Germany, and Tianjin, China
- Members organized events in observance of International Plastic Bags-Free Day (July 3)
- GAIA was involved in numerous events including: Zero Waste Conference with IndyACT in Lebanon; “Zero Waste Himalaya” in Bir, Himachal Pradesh, India; cement kilns events in Apaxco and Hermosillo, Mexico; a Zero Waste Conference in Parma, Italy; a delegation and workshop at the People’s Summit on Climate Change in Cochabamba, Bolivia; a Waste and Climate Change meeting for members and grassroots recyclers in Bogota, Colombia, with support for a mass mobilization and seminar for inclusive zero waste systems
- August 8 was declared Zero Waste Himalaya Day by participants of the Zero Waste Himalaya Skillshare organized by Deer Park Institute, Thanal and GAIA
- New GAIA report: *When the EU Wastes the Climate*
- New GAIA report: *Respect for Recyclers*



Tackling the Big Picture, Changing the Rules: Toxics Policy Highlights

GAIA supports members' efforts and works with numerous allies to secure positive policies that ban incineration, regulate toxic chemicals, safeguard climate finance for real waste and climate solutions, and promote zero waste approaches at the local, state/province, regional, and global levels. We carefully choose which policy debates to pursue, looking for opportunities where our additional capacity as an alliance makes a difference. This includes international policy work, where we can mobilize our broad membership, or policy efforts that cut across issues or are otherwise beyond the capacity of particular groups. We also create a venue for member groups to exchange ideas and experiences and seek support as they work on local and national policies.

Global Policy

Stockholm Convention: GAIA members have been consistently engaged in efforts to support the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), creating very fruitful synergies with IPEN. This has included participation in global, regional and national meetings related to the Convention's implementation. Many GAIA members—including CAATA in Mexico, ACPO and APROMAC in Brazil, Arnika in the Czech Republic, Eco Accord in Russia, the Center of Environmental Solutions in Belarus, and Thanal in India—have advocated with their governments to ratify the convention, worked on the development of national implementation plans, and documented and promoted Zero Waste as a waste approach that does not produce POPs. Given the high presence of POPs in incinerator emissions, advocating for enforcement of the Stockholm

Convention is seen as a powerful way to challenge incinerators.

Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management: GAIA has been active in work on the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). GAIA contributed to the global sampling of lead in decorative paints that IPEN and Toxics Link jointly coordinated, organizing the participation of the EcoWaste Coalition in the Philippines and Ecological Alert and Renewal—Thailand.

In November 2009, GAIA's International Co-Coordinator and members participated in the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting on SAICM held in Beijing, China. We advocated for a civil society-initiated statement on e-waste addressing the life cycle of electrical and electronic products and the repair and



GAIA members participated in the International Forum on Chemical Safety, Budapest 2006. Photo courtesy of JA!



Wastepickers representatives of the Global Alliance of Wastepickers and GAIA attend a UNFCCC meeting in Tianjin, China in October 2010 to raise concerns on the impacts of waste burning to their livelihood. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA

disposal of e-waste, which tends to be full of toxic components. In early 2010, NGOs participating in SAICM nominated GAIA to serve as public interest NGO representative in the SAICM Asia-Pacific Regional Group. In the Philippines, GAIA contributed significantly to the inclusion of chemical safety as an election issue, integrating SAICM in the electoral agenda of the environmental health movement.

Mercury: Because incinerators are a major source of mercury emissions, GAIA, along with other public interest groups, joined the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group Meeting that was held in Bangkok, Thailand in October 2009 to prepare for the first Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC1) for a globally-binding treaty on mercury, a dangerous neurotoxin. GAIA also took part in the INC1 held in Stockholm, Sweden in June 2010, joining some other 55 groups belonging to IPEN, Zero Mercury Working Group, and other networks.

European Regional Policy

Waste Framework Directive: GAIA's first major intervention in the European policy arena—drawing on the support of our network of more than 100 members in over 20 European countries—was a major battle around the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) in April 2008, undertaken in conjunction with the European Environmental Bureau, Health Care Without Harm, and Friends of the Earth/CEE Bankwatch. Globally, the European Union's environmental standards are often looked to as the “gold standard,” although on waste and incineration this has not historically been the case. Environmental groups in Europe worked hard to advocate for a policy to ensure that waste reduction, recycling and other front–end solutions were given priority over incineration. We mobilized comments from over 1,200 constituents. The most dramatic of our multifaceted interventions was our exposure of the clear conflict of interest of MEP Caroline Jackson, rapporteur for the Directive in the Environment Committee of the European Parliament, who was simultaneously accepting money from Shanks Group plc, a waste company with a terrible record of pollution and financial interests in landfills and incinerators. Our efforts drew media and parliamentary scrutiny of Jackson's ethics. Our work helped to support the inclusion of recycling targets—which, although weak, are better than no targets at all; and we defeated attempts to gut the existing waste hierarchy so that incineration would be treated as environmentally equivalent to

recycling. In 2010, GAIA publicly questioned the nomination of Connie Hedegaard as European Union Commissioner for Climate Action because of her history of support for incineration.

Biowaste Directive: Given the high proportion of organic discards in municipal solid waste, GAIA recognizes composting and other effective solutions for organics as critical to our goals. When the EU took up the question of whether to create a Biowaste Directive, which would set standards for composting and anaerobic digestion, GAIA prepared a report to the EU that called for high composting targets—in fact the highest of any proposed. We believe that pushing for such high targets from the beginning is strategic. Our strict, principled stance on incineration in EU debates has earned us respect and influenced European environmental organizations, and has contributed to shifting the “center of gravity” of the debate from acceptance of incineration as a “necessarily evil” to increasing efforts to prevent incineration. We hope to have a similar impact on the composting debate as it develops.

In addressing toxics in Europe, GAIA has also been active—and successful—in efforts to prevent the incinerator industry from weakening emissions regulations in the EU's revision of its Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Directive.



Green activists dramatize in front of the Japanese what they view as devastating “waste colonialism” if the controversial Japan–Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) is ratified and implemented. Photo by Gigie Cruz/GAIA

Stopping Toxic Trade

Toxic trade, especially in Asia, has been an ongoing concern for GAIA. In 2006 GAIA's Philippines office was active in mobilizing community opposition to the Japan–Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA), a controversial treaty biased toward Japan that would allow a long list of toxic waste materials to enter the Philippines, and that was the focus of a sustained media and activist campaign. As part of these efforts, GAIA members participated in a “funeral march” outside the Philippine Senate office to symbolize the death that the proposed ratification of JPEPA would hold for the environment and the economy. GAIA has also supported efforts to stop shipments of toxics around the world, often in collaboration with the Basel Action Network and BAN Toxics in the Philippines.

Historic Toxic Waste and Obsolete Pesticides

We have advocated for implementation of treatment alternatives for historic toxic waste and obsolete pesticides, using technologies that do not produce persistent organic pollutants (POPs). We have worked with partners to prevent the building of incinerators in Africa to burn obsolete pesticides and we have participated in many campaigns to prevent these pesticides from being burnt in cement kilns. Also, GAIA is an active partner in the ongoing UN–assisted non–combustion project for the elimination of the Philippines' stockpiles of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

Information Sharing, Technical Assistance, Research & Publications: Sharing and advancing knowledge

GAIA has helped to build grassroots capacity through information sharing—by means of active list serves and regularly updated web-based resources, provision of individualized technical assistance, and capacity to connect partners to experts who can assist their efforts. We share a vision of respecting local wisdom and becoming stronger through the diversity brought together within GAIA. We also believe deeply in the learning experience resulting from the exchange of information, opinions, and achievements.

We have produced different tools and resources for members to use in their struggles. groundWork and GAIA, for example, have worked on resources addressing the particular problems of cement kiln incineration. We maintain a web site in English and supporting pages in Spanish, and work with our members to sustain activist e-mail lists in English, Spanish, and Chinese, as well as regional and thematic lists. GAIA creates opportunities for members to share the resources they have created, maximizing information and tools available to the entire movement.

Information is critical to creating sustainable solutions. GAIA has grounded our work in thoughtful research and sound science. We have also made sure to follow the funding trail to understand who is promoting toxic strategies for waste management and why. We publish reports, fact sheets, and other informational and educational resources that help our partners make the health, environmental, and economic case for sound solutions. Our early publications emphasized the combination of health hazards and economic burdens imposed by incineration, particularly in the Global South.

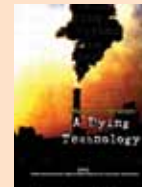
2002



Bankrolling Polluting Technology: The World Bank Group and Incineration

Details the problems with incineration and provides information on World Bank Group incineration projects and policy.

2003



Waste Incineration: A Dying Technology

Available in Chinese, translated with the help of Taiwan Watch Institute

Explains why incinerators are an unsustainable and obsolete method for dealing with waste.

2004



Resources Up in Flames/ Recursos en llamas

(English and Spanish)

Details the economic pitfalls of incineration versus a zero waste approach in the Global South.

2005



Incineración de residuos: una tecnología muriendo

*Spanish edition of Waste Incineration:
A Dying Technology*



Aportes para un futuro libre de contaminantes: Oportunidades para avanzar hacia el tratamiento de desechos de establecimientos de salud sin incineración en América Latina

*(Inputs for a Toxics Free Future: Opportunities to move towards non-incineration medical waste treatment in Latin America)
Co-released with Salud Sin Daño – HCWH Latin America
and support from IPEN*

2006



Incinerators in Disguise: Case Studies of Gasification, Pyrolysis, and Plasma in Europe, Asia, and the United States
(GAIA and Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice)

2008



Stop Trashing the Climate
(with Eco-Cycle and the Institute for Local Self-Reliance)
Provides compelling evidence that preventing waste and expanding reuse, recycling, and composting programs (aiming for Zero Waste) is one of the fastest, cheapest, and most effective strategies available for combating climate change.



Incinerators Trash Community Health
Challenges the incinerator industry's claims that incinerators have "zero emissions" and are "safe for community health" with real facts about how incinerators contaminate people and the environment with toxic and cancer-causing emissions.



Zero Waste for Zero Warming: GAIA statement of concern on waste and climate change (English and Spanish)
A position paper on waste and climate change that calls for zero waste strategies to address global warming and rejects the false solutions of incinerators and landfill gas collection.



Waste and Climate Change: Turn the EU Away from More Incineration (GAIA, Health Care Without Harm, and Bankwatch)
A fact sheet designed to encourage the ENVI Committee of the European Parliament to oppose upgrading incineration in EU legislation, support plans to increase diversion rates, and support efforts to legislate on biowaste.



Incinerando el futuro: la incineracion de residuos destruye nuestra salud y el ambiente
(Burning the future: waste incineration destroys our health and the environment)

2009



Mercury Rising
(for the Mercury Policy Project/Tides Center, with Zero Mercury Working Group, and Ban Toxics!)
Sheds light on the role of mercury-added products, the largest contributor to mercury in the waste stream, and the dangers of atmospheric mercury emissions.



Clean Development Mechanism Funding for Waste Incineration: Financing the Demise of Waste Worker Livelihood, Community Health, and Climate
At least 15 million people around the world depend upon waste picking and the recovery of resources from waste for their livelihoods; yet the Clean Development Mechanism has been funding waste incinerators and landfills, even though recovering waste through re-use, recycling, and composting serves to create many more jobs.



An Industry Blowing Smoke
Ten reasons why gasification, pyrolysis, and plasma incineration are not green solutions.

2010



When the EU Wastes the Climate
Warns about the negative impacts on the climate and sustainability resulting from current EU policies to reward energy from incineration.



Incinerators: Myths vs. Facts
The incinerator industry has tried to expand its sector by marketing its facilities as "waste to energy"—using misleading claims of "reducing climate pollution" and being a "clean energy source," but this document dispels some of the most common myths about incineration with real facts.



Respect for Recyclers
(English, Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese)
Illustrates that reducing, reusing, and recycling municipal waste is one of the easiest and most effective means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while providing gainful employment to millions, mostly in the informal sector.

We celebrate with you ten years of grassroots organizing, strategic alliances, global campaigns, and creative local economic development initiatives against incinerators and for safe, sustainable and just alternatives. We congratulate you for all the magnificent successes you have achieved so far. You have demonstrated worldwide how to effectively stop incinerators, address climate change and environmental injustice, and implement zero waste alternatives. Our common realization that the health of the people and other living beings on earth, our planet's fragile biosphere and the finite resources available to all of us are being endangered by polluting and inefficient production practices and health-threatening disposal methods, bring us together in solidarity. (...) In solidarity with the people, we shall achieve our vision of a just, toxic-free world without incineration, without pesticides and without persistent toxic substances!

Romeo F. Quijano
President, PAN Philippines
Former Co-chair, IPEN

GAIA has made it possible for our work on research and of support for communities and local government on incineration issues (hazardous and solid waste incinerators, and cement kilns) and Zero Waste, to be a lot more informed scientifically, and effectively linked to confront the big industries promoting dirty technologies, but above all, it has been a work nurtured by knowledge, experiences and fights shared in this group, like a single one, to have healthy communities and environment.

Marisa Jacott
Fronteras Comunes, Mexico

To be able to fight these projects, French anti-incineration NGOs need to have access to relevant information and contacts with experienced colleagues from all around the world as well as material support when needed. That's exactly what GAIA provides to us: networking, knowledge, experience and material support. Many thanks for that!

François Veillerette
Mouvement pour les Droits et le Respect, France

Since joining GAIA back in 2008 the number of UKWIN members has increased ten fold to more than 200. . . . We have enjoyed major successes with many local planning committees voting to refuse planning permission for waste incinerators. . . . [O]ur success can be measured by the really useful knowledge we exchange. In that respect, GAIA has helped UKWIN grow more knowledgeable, and helps us to be part of a global effort.

United Kingdom Without Incineration Network
(UKWIN)

I have been blessed with watching the growth of GAIA from its early inception. I have continually been awed by its strong collaborative process, its strategic direction and its care and community building among its members. GAIA has built a global network on not only opposing dangerous waste incineration, but in advancing local, sustainable economic development that helps us kick our addiction to toxic chemicals and a throwaway society. I look forward to joining GAIA in creating transformative change in the next ten years of its vibrant life.

Gary Cohen
President and Co-Founder
Health Care Without Harm

Congratulations to GAIA on its 10th Anniversary. (...) As NGO representative to the National Solid Waste Management Commission, I have relied and continue to rely on the studies and information provided by GAIA to push for incineration alternatives. We also appreciate learning about the experiences of other GAIA partners, and getting scientific information on the many issues confronting us especially the work with the informal waste sector. We wish GAIA another successful ten years.

Eileen Sison
NGO Representative, Philippines
National Solid Waste Management Commission

As we all work to advance our mission for a toxics-free future, the environmental health and justice movement is made stronger by GAIA's diligence and passion. GAIA members and IPEN participating organizations are often one and the same, illustrating our common bond. As we look back, our joint GAIA-IPEN efforts over the past 10 years reflect local, national and global successes, elevating the level of chemical consciousness and responsibility among decision-makers and others around the world. In solidarity,

Bjorn Beeler
IPEN International Coordinator

GAIA has been fundamental in the support to our work, offering technical support and strengthening politically our actions in local territory. Union makes the strength and the right knowledge makes us lovers of the protection of planet earth and the life that depends on it. A very big hug!

Jeffer Castelo Branco
ACPO, Brazil

Knowing Annie Leonard's involvement with GAIA and watching her animation—The Story of Stuff—reinforced my understanding and clarity of the major obstacles to community based sustainable development. It became clear to me that these hurdles were not unique to South Africa, but are the result of generally corrupt relations between governments and corporations. These relations generally serve narrow command control self interest, giving rise to politics and economics that work directly against self reliance and people centred communities. In addition, knowing GAIA has helped me become aware that we are not alone in the struggle for community centred sustainable development. There are many people in different parts of the world who are involved in environmentally sustainable grassroots initiatives—who think outside Adam Smith's unfettered 'free market' economics, and catchy phrases of party political democracy, development and hegemony.

Mabule Mokhine
Earthlife Africa

Why GAIA matters? Well, all our problems lie in one simple fault: the way we consume products. This has caused destruction of natural areas, killed biodiversity, emitted greenhouse gases and trashed our planet. GAIA is the strongest global network addressing this specific issue, which is the base of all issues. Zero Waste, Clean Production, Sustainable Consumption are the heart of GAIA's work, and what we all are aiming for. The work of GAIA is what makes it important, but what makes it beautiful is the people inside it. In July, IndyACT and GAIA organized a Zero Waste conference in Lebanon, which included the most impressive speakers I could think of. Our role in the network is becoming more and more crucial to face the dangers that face the planet and future generations.

Wael Hmaidan
IndyACT – The League of Independent Activists, Lebanon
Member of GAIA Steering Committee



**Celebrating 10 years
of community action for
Zero Waste solutions**



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We want to acknowledge and thank past Steering Committee members: George Cheng, Madhumita Dutta, Olinca Marino, Verónica Odriozola, Bobby Peek, Jindrich Petrlik, Luc Potvin, Ralph Ryder, and Neil Tangri.

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GAIA's coordination team is based in offices in the Philippines, the United States, Spain, Chile, and India, and we are pleased to have been a dynamic ally in local struggles in the communities where we live and work. For many years, we also had an office in Argentina, where we collaborated closely in key zero waste and anti-incinerator struggles.

GAIA very much appreciates the following institutional funders who have generously underwritten our critical work over the years:

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Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)

Any omissions from these lists are a function of accident rather than intent.

Layout and design: Jo Manalo www.jomanalo.com



Our successes have demonstrated the power of grassroots communities, backed by good science, to advocate for safe, economically just, and feasible solutions.



www.no-burn.org