



Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives
Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2010

Dear GAIA Members and Friends,

We're glad to present for your reading pleasure this third issue of the GAIA News. The last two months saw us co-organizing two groundbreaking initiatives to promote Zero Waste in [Lebanon](#) and in the [Himalayas](#).

While the events happened in remarkably different settings (one in a Beirut hotel just a stone's throw away from the Mediterranean Sea and the other in a former monastery sheltered by the Himalayan mountains), both were marked by animated discussions about real solutions beyond the archaic choice of "burn or bury." In addition, in [Bonn](#), we made a strong intervention before the Clean Development Mechanism's Executive Board against "waste to energy" projects that undermine waste pickers' livelihoods, increase emissions, and cause serious injustice.

During this period, the GAIA Steering Committee and representatives of the Coordination Team also converged in Beirut for a historic in-

person meeting hosted by [IndyACT](#). The three-day meeting held prior to the Lebanon Zero Waste Conference enabled the Committee, in many aspects a true powerhouse, to understand the state of affairs of GAIA, including opportunities for development and growth, and deliberate about forward-thinking ideas to meet current and future challenges facing the network. Among those present were our long-time champions Annie Leonard and Von Hernandez, former international co-coordinators, who were among those who conceived and shepherded GAIA during our toddler years ([see the list of all committee members here](#)). We have come a long way since then, and we are now approaching our [10 year anniversary](#) this December. We invite all of our friends, allies and members to help us celebrate by sending in photographs and stories to gaia_10years@no-burn.org by September 29th, 2010.

In this issue we also honor [Cecilia Allen's](#) 7 years of outstanding work as GAIA's Latin American Coordinator, we are grateful she will be helping us with a few special projects before she moves on to her next adventure.

Finally, this issue would not be complete without celebrating the release of Annie Leonard's most recent short film, [The Story of Cosmetics](#), GAIA Zero Waste Europe web site and blog--check it out at www.zerowasteurope.eu and our latest victories in [Argentina](#), [Brazil](#), the [U.S.](#), [Canada](#) and [Italy](#). These victories represent the

power of citizen-driven advocacy against incineration and toxins and for healthy and just solutions.

Happy reading, and thank you for your continuing participation and solidarity with GAIA.

Warm regards,

Manny C. Calonzo
Co-Coordinator
GAIA



Asia-Nepal: Zero Waste Himalayas workshop

This summer, 50 participants from 24 organizations and 7 countries gathered at Deer Park Institute in Bir, Himachal Pradesh in the Himalayas to attend

"Towards Zero Waste Himalaya," a workshop organized by Deer Park Institute, Thanal, and GAIA. At the workshop, participants discussed their concerns on waste and climate change in the Himalayan region and developed strategies and action plans for protecting the region. One participant, Mr. Tshewang Dendup, while talking about his dream for a Zero Waste Himalayas, said he hoped that people would find

spiritual treasures, not trash. The workshop ended on August 8 with the drafting of the 'Bir Declaration on Zero Waste Himalayas,' where the groups decided to work together for a Zero Waste Himalayan region by creating an action plan, which includes setting up Zero Waste pilot projects in India, Nepal, and Bhutan. Check out the article [*Find Spiritual Treasures not Trash*](#) to learn more.

Photograph: Courtesy of Deer Park Institute



Latin America-Brazil: Brazil sanctions law to formalize the work of recyclers

On August 2nd, 2010 President Lula da Silva of Brazil approved the National Solid Waste Act. One of the main successes of the new policy is the formal inclusion and recognition of independent recyclers and waste collectors. This is a great victory because the National Movement of Recyclable Waste Collectors represents more than 800,000 people. A great number of these people have worked for years without formal organization and without the support of Public Authorities. As President da Silva said, "This law sanctions the social inclusion of workers, who for many years were forgotten and mistreated by the public power." Severino Lima Jr., one of the leaders of the Movement, hopes that this law will assist in improved conditions for workers in their profession. He says, "We want a better life. We want to be recognized as recyclers and not as garbage

collectors." He also expects the law to increase recyclers' salaries to Brazil's minimum wage, approximately 250 USD per month. [Read More](#)

Photograph: Brazilian President Lula da Silva speaks with Severino Lima Jr., a leader of Brazil's waste picker movement. Courtesy of Severino Lima Jr.



Europe-Germany: CDM threatens waste picker livelihoods

In July, two members of GAIA's climate team, Neil Tangri and Mariel Vilella, traveled to Bonn to attend the UNFCCC meetings, and to see what a

bureaucracy in crisis looks like. The bureaucracy in question is the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), the UN agency in charge of awarding carbon credits to projects in developing countries. At the CDM's Executive Board meeting, Christiana Figueres, the new head of the UNFCCC, told the board bluntly that the CDM had to reform or wither away. But while Ms. Figueres said that the CDM was being too stingy with awarding credits, GAIA's complaint - shared by many other organizations - is that the CDM awards credits to projects which should not receive them. These include waste-to-energy incinerators and hundreds of new landfill schemes designed to collect methane gas. These projects are not only false solutions to climate change, but also jeopardize the livelihoods of waste pickers, some of the poorest

people on earth, by denying them access to dumps where they collect tons of recyclable materials. We should turn to the waste pickers for the solution to our mounting waste crises rather than taking away their livelihoods. In its interventions, GAIA also pushed the CDM to ensure that its projects are compliant with international law, particularly the Stockholm Convention. See our [blog post](#) or read the [press coverage](#).

Photograph: Courtesy of Gigie Cruz



North America-United States: Victories in the U.S.!

This summer's [action at Covanta's RDF Incinerator](#) in Detroit has resulted in a dialogue between the [Zero Waste Detroit Coalition](#) and the Michigan Teamsters'

union with the goal of replacing incineration with a comprehensive recycling program for Detroit. Please also check out two new excellent videos of the Detroit action on [our website](#) and on [B Media Collective's website](#). In New York, Covanta has decided to postpone its expansion of the Westbury waste incinerator in Hempstead, NY, citing economic reasons for the delay. Due to [community organizing efforts](#), New York State has decided to prioritize recycling over incineration. In Connecticut, Covanta was forced to temporarily shut down its Wallingford WTE facility in July, when the EPA found the facility

emitting excessive levels of cancer-causing dioxins. [Covanta is presently being sued by the Connecticut State Attorney General](#)-the second time in the past three years that the state has sued Covanta for such emissions infractions. In Massachusetts, the [Stop Spewing Carbon Campaign](#), a community-led initiative, announced a major victory in the fight against biomass incinerators, when [Massachusetts legislators announced they would not provide clean energy incentives for biomass energy](#) in their Renewable Portfolio Standard. The Massachusetts Secretary of Energy issued a letter announcing that state laws would be brought in line with current science, acknowledging that burning biomass creates excessive climate pollution. GAIA also celebrates the defeat of California Assembly Bill 222, a bill that would have given new incentives for staged incinerators in California. A number of recycling organizations, environmental justice organizations, and unions worked to defeat this bill, which would have considered these incinerators as renewable energy sources and equivalent to recycling.

Photograph: Kids play at the Go Lightly Elementary & Middle School playground in Detroit, just 2 blocks from the largest waste incinerator in the world. Courtesy of Ruckus Society, All rights reserved by Ruckus Society



**Learn about the work of GAIA Member
IndyACT, The League of Independent
Activists**

IndyACT was created as a global league of independent environmental, social and cultural activists that support and seek to nurture others in order to achieve their goals to effect positive change in the world. It started during the July 2006 war on Lebanon, when a group of veteran and skilled activists from different countries came together to work on the worst environmental disaster in the history of the Eastern Mediterranean. More than 10,000 tons of fuel oil spilled into the sea due to the Israeli bombing of the Jiyeh power plant South of Lebanon. After the oil spill crisis was under control, the "Oil Spill Working Group" realized that in Lebanon and around the world there are a huge number of passionate independent activists that have been trying to make a difference, but are unable to operate independently and so the League of Independent Activists was created. IndyACT has established local, regional and international campaigns that are based on non-violent and innovative ideas to inspire positive change. IndyACT's motto is "Passion with Professionalism." Read more about IndyACT on their [website](#).

Logo: Courtesy of IndyACT



Middle-East-Lebanon: Lebanon Zero Waste Conference

Earlier this summer in Lebanon, IndyACT, in collaboration with GAIA, held an international conference on Zero Waste.

The conference included presentations from a number of experts including Kevin Drew from the city of San Francisco, Annie Leonard and others from GAIA's steering committee, and GAIA staff. The conference shows how several authorities around the world have started to adopt the "Zero Waste" principle and how other waste management policies have failed, especially incineration technologies. The Lebanese government is currently working to address solid waste due to the lack of space to build more landfills. Wael Hmaidan, Executive Director of IndyACT, said, "If we (Lebanon) decide to proceed with the adoption of incinerators as a solution to the problem of solid waste, then we would be burning our money, losing job opportunities, while producing carcinogenic and deadly chemical fumes." IndyACT is calling on the Lebanese state to be the first country to adopt a "Zero Waste" strategy and to develop a progressive law to implement it. Please read the full article on [IndyACT's blog](#).

Photograph: Annie Leonard of Story of Stuff and Wael Hmaidan of IndyACT address the Lebanon Zero Waste Conference. Courtesy of IndyACT.



Europe-Italy: Lucca, Italy is Incinerator Free: A Short History

In 1996 when the province of Lucca in the Tuscany region of Italy faced its first incinerator proposal, AmbienteFuturo, an Italian environmental group and GAIA

member, sought help from Dr. Paul Connett, incinerator expert and GAIA ally. At the community's request Dr. Connett went to Lucca province, home to over 300,000 people, and educated citizens about the major environmental and health concerns produced by incineration. Despite opposition from the entire community, the regional government of Tuscany accepted the incinerator proposal. In 1997 construction began on the Pietrasanta incinerator. This July, after more than ten years of hard work, the community has successfully shut the incinerator down, and all of the mayors in the province are promoting a door-to-door waste collection system in their municipalities. GAIA congratulates our friends at AmbienteFuturo, Rossano Ercolini, Dr. Paul Connett and all the other people that made this victory possible. [Read the full history](#) or learn more about [AmbienteFuturo](#). Please note their original website is in Italian, but the link will take you to a translated version.

Map: The yellow dots mark the victories against incinerators since 1996, larger photograph on their website.
Courtesy of AmbienteFuturo.



North America-Canada: British Columbia moves toward Zero Waste!

Months of excellent community organizing by the Zero Waste B.C. Coalition paid off when the Metro Vancouver Board approved a waste diversion target of 80% by 2020, as well as a ban on wood and organics from incinerators and landfills by 2015. Unfortunately, however, despite strong opposition from a majority of local Mayors, [the MV Board has decided to seek approval for the inclusion of incineration](#) in the region's waste plan from BC Minister of Environment, Barry Penner. Penner said he will consider all [public comments and expert opinions](#) before making a decision. Please send your zero waste messages.

Logo: Courtesy of Zero Waste British Columbia

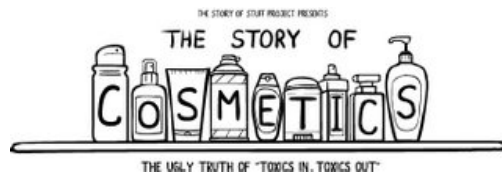


Cordoba, Argentina celebrates the defeat of Innviron's incinerator plans in the city

(Argentina, August 3rd, 2010). Local groups celebrated the rejection of a proposal for the treatment of municipal solid waste that Innviron, a

USA company had made earlier this year. Local groups announced that they will remain alert since there is a chance of opening new proposals that could include incineration as a waste management system for the city. The decision to reject Innviron's bid was made after Daniel Giacomino, mayor of Cordoba city, visited the facilities of Innviron in the United States. He noted, "The technology that Innviron operates in the USA does not comply with the identified needs." Several months ago, plans for three projects to install gasification plants for municipal solid waste in the cities of Cordoba, Villa Maria, and Rio Cuarto (all part of the Cordoba province, in Argentina) were announced, with an investment of US \$315 million. In response, organized groups and international alliances (Coalición Ciudadana Anti Incineración from Argentina, local members of GAIA and members of Greenpeace Argentina) deployed a large movement that questioned this waste management proposal. [Read More](#)

Photograph: Courtesy of EcoSitio



Media: The Story of Cosmetics

On July 21st The Story of Stuff Project released The Story of

Cosmetics, a 7-minute animated film, exposing the shadow side of the \$50 billion dollar beauty industry. The film was co-produced by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, a U.S. national coalition of over 150 women's, environmental and health organizations and Free

Range Studios. The Story of Cosmetics reveals the toxic chemicals in our everyday personal care products from lotion to baby shampoo-chemicals linked to cancer and birth defects. The film also suggests ways that we can work together to move the industry away from hazardous chemicals and towards safer alternatives. The film concludes with a call for viewers to support U.S. legislation aimed at ensuring the safety of cosmetics and personal care products. We invite viewers from around the world to join us in keeping our personal care products toxic-free. Watch the [film](#), check out the [press](#) or visit the the [Campaign for Safe Cosmetics](#).

Graphic: Courtesy of the Story of Stuff Project

GAIA's 10 Year Anniversary: In December GAIA will be celebrating its 10th Anniversary. We look forward to celebrating with everyone! A lot has happened since we created this amazing alliance, and we want to reflect as much as possible of it in the special editions we are preparing to celebrate and so **we are sending out a call to our members to please share your stories!**

You can share all of the information below or choose the ones you prefer

1. Please share with us a few sentences about your successes since you have been a GAIA member. (Anything that you consider a success, big or small! Starting a compost program, a ZW plan in your community, passing great legislation, stopping an incinerator, building

- a local movement, etc) Please include the year and location.
2. If you were asked to provide advice to other groups trying to achieve a similar success, what would you tell them? What are strategies or approaches that contributed to your success?
 3. If you have participated in the Global Day of Action, have you had particular successes related to that?
 4. How has being a member of GAIA helped you?
 5. What would you want others to know about GAIA?
 6. Is there anything you would like to tell or share with the GAIA family? Any message, wish, thought?

Please share photographs!! Pictures that reflect your work, photos of your group, etc!



Please send this info to: gaia_10years@no-burn.org before September 29th! Thank you!!!

GAIA celebrates Cecilia Allen!

GAIA honors Cecilia Allen's seven years of outstanding work as GAIA's Latin America Coordinator. From pushing the city of Buenos Aires to move towards zero waste, to supporting countless communities fighting incinerators around Latin America, to linking people globally around zero waste, Cecilia's leadership has been a huge benefit to GAIA, the movement in Latin America, and around the world. Cecilia's unwavering dedication to ZERO WASTE principles and her commitment to the power of people's movements has left an indelible

mark on GAIA that will remain with us for years to come. She is now helping GAIA with a few special projects, including our 10-year anniversary report, before she moves on to new adventures. We are grateful for Cecilia's dedication and hard work to help Latin America transition away from landfilling and incinerating our waste and toward zero waste strategies, and look forward to her staying in touch as an active GAIA member in the coming years!