

## NEWS OF NORWAY – PART 2: GAIA INTERNATIONALLY

*GAIA's arbeid innen GAIA International - - separat artikkel / del 2, internasjonalt arbeid og U-hjelp:*

*Kort beskrivelse, og bilder av 3 prosjekter – foreslår i alt 3 til 4 bilder.*

### GAIA abroad

In addition to seminars and research with the GAIA International network, GAIA's members have taken their Norwegian ecological expertise to many countries. This includes hands-on building with villagers in Russia, consulting on low energy schools in Scotland, project leadership and design of a hospital in Bhutan, and a master plan for a new Ecocity in Taiwan. All these projects, pictured here, have sustainability as their central theme.

GAIA members Rolf Jacobsen and Arild Berg have led a series of exchange projects in Russia, Latvia and other eastern European countries, in cooperation with the BRO (“bridge building”) organization and Camphill schools who work with disadvantaged young people. For ten years this initiative has been leading groups from Norway to “learn by doing”, building low cost rural housing with local communities. The program fosters international cooperation for sustainable development and simultaneously introduces the participants and the local communities to simple, ecological building techniques based on natural resources.





The **Punakha district hospital** in Bhutan, for which GAIA's Chris Butters was project coordinator and architect, has been commended as an example of culturally appropriate architecture, including nomination for Sweden's international Ralph Erskine Award. It has been extended several times, and used as a model for subsequent hospitals in Bhutan. It was nevertheless built at a low cost, and – perhaps most challenging for projects in such countries – delivered on time. The hospital focuses on passive climatization and local materials, and above all on what Butters calls “cultural sustainability” – sensitive to the fine traditions and symbols of this little known Himalayan country whilst carefully introducing improved modern construction methods.





The **Tainan Ecocity Master Plan** was prepared in collaboration with local partners by GAIA International members including Joachim Eble Architektur (Germany), Dr, Varis Bokalders (Sweden) and Chris Butters. It was perhaps the first concept for a sustainable city that is based on full integration of a city and the rural surroundings. This creates new, exciting synergy effects between town and country, in sectors including food production, renewable energy, biofuels, waste treatment and microclimate. It offers a future vision for genuine economic revalorization of the rural areas, often neglected by planners and where most of the poorest people still live.



As within the Norway group, GAIA International is based on networking and interdisciplinary work where a wide range of skills are brought in as needed. This includes experts in fields such as energy, climatology, sustainable mobility and nature based water treatment systems. This has also led to the “export” of some original Norwegian ideas; the technique of dynamic insulation (or pore ventilation) was researched by GAIA Lista and has with their assistance been applied with surprising success in several swimming halls designed and built by the GAIA Scotland office. GAIA Norway’s international members have also led courses in Permaculture design in several countries including Spain and Chile.

Chris Butters

Illustrations:

Self help housing, Russia / BRO

The Punakha hospital, Bhutan

Master Plan, Ecocity Tainan