



## **BIOTECHTURE PLANET EARTH'S MISSION STATEMENT**

*Educating the public in the form of web sites, e-Books, printed materials, workshops, lectures, and videos.*

*Building community centers, schools and homes using local materials and sustainable living methods.*

*Teaching people in disaster areas how to use sustainable living structures to rebuild their communities.*

*Researching and developing new materials and educational techniques for affordable, sustainable buildings and homes.*

## **PROJECTS and RESEARCH PROCESS EXPLAINED**

*Biotecture Planet Earth is a 501(3)(c) non-profit that fundraises and collects donations to build community centers, schools or homes in disaster stricken areas, using local materials and sustainable building methods, teaching local people around the world how to rebuild their communities using sustainable building and living methods.*

### **- Ongoing research**

*Biotecture Planet Earth performs ongoing research on sustainable and alternative building methods via its partner organizations.*

*Biotecture Planet Earth also continuously researches housing and environmental problems globally in order to plan what projects and places to focus its activity on.*

### **- Project by project research**

*Biotecture Planet Earth works on a project-by-project basis. The following process is used for each project:*

*1 Project choice. There are two ways in which Biotecture Planet Earth chooses what projects to focus its activity on. These are chosen after an intensive research on many levels:*



a. *Project proposal.* Biotecture Planet Earth receives a proposal from an organization or individual that is already active or has some type of connection to an area or territory that is in need of support in sustainable housing or disaster relief. Once a proposal is received, the team from Biotecture Planet Earth needs to research to validate that the information provided is true and that a real need exists in every particular case.

b. *Choice from research.* Biotecture Planet Earth needs to constantly follow environmental news and issues on a global level in order to be ahead and be able to help where it is most needed. That way, when an unfortunate natural disaster happens for example, Biotecture Planet Earth can be ready to chose to develop a project in order to offer and apply help as soon as possible and where it is needed the most.

2 Pre project research: Once a project has been decided upon, a more specific research commences before being able to physically go to the project place. This research phase lasts for 4-6 months.

a. *Cultural background and living habits:* It is a must for Biotecture Planet Earth to acquire extensive knowledge on the cultural, historical and family background of the location of a project in order to develop and execute a sustainable project. Different from other non profit and aid organizations that follow a more “post-colonial” approach of delivering aid, Biotecture Planet Earth is committed to sustainable support, which means that an extensive research needs to take place beforehand to determine the best way of supporting a specific community or group of people in an affected area. Biotecture Planet Earth believes in working with a local community hand in hand, encouraging a sustainable relationship and a two-way knowledge transfer. This part is usually done through online research, email communication and coordination with local organizations and individuals.

b. *Housing needs and living arrangements:* In order to decide on a design of a building, Biotecture Planet Earth needs to research what the housing and living arrangements are in each location where it is active. A “one-size-fits-all” approach is not possible when it comes to sustainable housing. For example, in the Philippines the main need is of structural nature, having a structure that provides shelter during storms and typhoons, while in Africa the main need is to have a structure that catches rain water to get through the dry season. Also, in Malawi, there is a strong need for clean showers and toilets to encourage



*hygiene and avoid diseases, whereas in Nepal a housing structure cannot have an incorporate shower or bathroom as traditionally these are placed outside the house to avoid bad luck. This is all important research that needs to take place before a project is finalized in order to define a process and design that is sustainable to the local direct beneficiaries.*

*c. Local building methods and materials: A defining step when it comes to determining the design of the building and the two-way knowledge transfer between locals and volunteers, is the in depth research process on local building methods and materials. Biotecture Planet Earth does extensive research on what materials are available locally and low cost in order to facilitate buildings being easily replicated by the local community in the future, on local building methods that can be adapted and incorporated into the sustainable building methods taught AND learned by Biotecture Planet Earth and its group of volunteers. This part of the research process is also very important when it comes to defining the final budget for each project.*

*3 Project implementation: During the actual build or on-site project implementation, every daily activity is recorded and documented to be part of the research process and analysis done at a later stage.*

*4 Post project research: Once a project is completed and the team returns, the research process continues. It is important to analyze what worked and what didn't work. Biotecture Planet Earth maintains contact and regularly analyzes the situation in a project location to ensure that the constructed building serves its cause. This is then communicated to the public and to the team of volunteers that physically served its time and resources to a specific project. The research process used here is a combination of online communication with on-site members of the community, interviews with representatives of local partner organizations and personal visits.*

*In some cases and whenever possible, the team returns to the location, which provides a stronger method of research and facilitates the analysis of the actual durability of the building. For example, in Malawi a second phase provided the opportunity to see the results of a first phase of the build, enabling the organization to make certain changes in the approach (in this case a stronger focus on knowledge transfer) to provide a better service to the local community. Another example is the second visit to the Philippines location which enabled*



*Biotecture Planet Earth to research and measure the durability of the typhoon resistant building constructed a year earlier, by inspecting the building itself and doing in-person interviews with those affected by the typhoon. The findings of this research in this case was remarkable, as they showed that the building performed even better as shelter to its inhabitants in a natural disaster situation than expected.*

*Biotecture Planet Earth strives to learn and be able to provide better service and better support on an ongoing basis in order to create a better, more sustainable world one case at a time.*

### **- External research**

*Biotecture Planet Earth encourages and supports external research done by volunteers or organizations that Biotecture Planet Earth has worked with. In this instance, we have supported students and professors from a number of universities, including a bachelor thesis developed by two young students from the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Lucerne.*

For more information: [www.biotectureplanetearth.com](http://www.biotectureplanetearth.com)