

## Editorial



This newsletter relates mainly to Nepal where we have completed as tough but successful year. Christa Drigalla was on site twice and had plenty of opportunities to monitor stove-building activities in the villages. Her report contains a lot of descriptions of her experience and insider-information which we do not want to keep from you. For that reason a large section of the newsletter is filled with Christa's report.

We have received reports from the health station in Gulmi documenting a decrease in respiratory diseases since villages were supplied with our smoke-free stoves. That is news which we are very proud of and which motivates us to continue our work.

Thankfully we are increasingly supported by companies and other organisations which finance a large number of stoves in a selected area and thereby help us to speed up stove roll-out. In this newsletter we report on an action with the "Hand in Hand Fond" from Rapunzel and "Deutsche Umwelthilfe" (German Environmental Support).

There are two more things which I want to highlight concerning our organisation: due to the increasing charges we have decided to change banks; and have switched to a new bank which provides us much better conditions. Please see the new account details at the end of the newsletter.

This is the time of year when many of you will be booking your summer vacations. If you'd like to do something for environmental protection, you can offset the CO<sub>2</sub>-emission, e.g. of your flight, by donations to our environmental protection project in Nepal. You can calculate the relevant emissions [here](#). You can find information on how to offset your emissions on [our website](#).

We hope you enjoy our newsletter.

Dr. Frank Dengler, Chairman

**Stove-Counter January 2018** 63961 smoke-free stoves in Nepal\*  
628 in Kenya  
1620 in Ethiopia

\*including 7141 Rocket Stoves for emergency shelters

## Nepal 2017

Report from Christa Drigalla

Currently the political situation in Nepal is very exciting. 2017 was an election year. After the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal came into force in 2016 rebuilding of the state has begun. In future there will be seven provinces (states) each with their own government. The national administration has been restructured and a lot of power has been decentralised. Voting at communal levels took place in several rounds in spring. Provincial and national elections followed in autumn, again in several rounds, and accompanied by many protests.

The final results were recently published at the end of January. There were no major surprises. The communist party received the majority of the votes as expected. Now the provincial capitals are being named and the administration is being set up in each province.

Our stove-making project is directly impacted by the changes in several regions, as we work very closely with the government representatives. We also need contact to the elected representatives in the villages as bridge-heads between the stove-makers and the villagers. All posts were newly filled after the elections. Staffing took time to complete; so some offices were only partially staffed or even unstaffed for a time. All this caused delays in our projects

Furthermore several places have been renamed resulting in further confusion. People have new address without having moved house. We have a lot of work to bring our database up to date.

**Dolakha, Ramechhap and Kavre**, our project area in the east which includes our environmental protection project was heavily affected by the earthquakes in 2015. The reconstruction work has only started in earnest in Dolahka. Most of the houses there were completely destroyed. In the meantime about one thousand houses and a corresponding number of stoves could be rebuilt. The authorities in Kavre and Ramechhap often only certified "limited damage" resulting in a reduction of the, in any case, meagre financial support. In consequence many people are only making minimal repairs and living with the result. According to official figures reconstruction has not started for 85% of the impacted houses, even now, two years after the earthquakes. Our stove makes are also often impacted; nonetheless they keep in touch with villagers in their region and offer support in installing a new stove whenever possible.



Attaching the stove ID to a house

**Gulmi:** after many delays, stove building in Gulmi district could finally be completed; now the district has been declared "indoor pollution

free". The Social Welfare Council made a survey of the final results. Many valuable suggestions for improvement were discussed during the presentation of the final report.

In Gulmi we executed a special project with two experienced stove makers with an aim to improving the long-term usability of the stoves. Our maintenance model "chimney sweep" will now be started. It is a combination of service which can be ordered as required and repeated training and information about use and value of the smoke-free stoves. The costs are by-and-large covered by the home-owners.

**Pyuthan:** stove making has also picked up speed in Pyuthan, a neighbouring district of Gulmi. After obstacles which had to be overcome, more than nine thousand stoves could be built last year. Nonetheless the project had to be extended for six months due to an interruption caused by the elections which prevented completion of the planned twenty-three thousand stoves in time.



Family with a new stove in Pyuthan

In November we visited the district to review the results. Twenty stove makers were presented with their certificates after building 150 stoves. An extensive discussion with the men and women working on site was very valuable, and made clear the value of the close co-operation with the local authorities. The difficulties which the stove makers face as guests in the villages could also be discussed. Persuading people of the advantages of the smoke-free cooking stoves is not always successful. We also had the possibility to observe the building and installation of a stove from start till finish. The stove makers build their first 150 stoves after their training under supervision of an experienced colleague; it was a pleasure to see this in action. Later we visited several households and could discuss directly the experience people had gathered with their new stoves.



Handing out the certificates to the stove builders

In Pyuthan two courses for new stove makers were completed last year along with an additional feedback training. The feedback training, allows people to exchange tips and tricks and gives us a chance to remind people of our standards and to correct errors which have crept in over time. In Pyuthan we identified a group of "stove masters" who will be offered additional work helping us start stove-making in new areas.

**Swastha Chuli Office Kathmandu:** All the threads come together in the office in Kathmandu. Anita Badal, our manager, keeps in touch with the co-ordinators in the district as well as to the individual stove-makers. She works closely with the government authority AEPC (Alternative Energy Promotion Centre) and ensures the requirements of the Social Welfare Council, which approves our project, are satisfied. The restructuring after the elections greatly affected these authorities; almost all staff were replaced or shifted to other areas. Anita keeps the books for the NGO and reports regularly to Die Ofenmacher e.V. in Munich. She visits the project areas and is the contact person to help the stove-makers with their problems.



Anita Badal on tour

As banks are not widespread in Nepal many transactions are paid in cash. Normal bank statements are often only provided after half a day waiting in queues. The co-ordinators visit the Kathmandu office regularly to present the stove-making data and receive their payments. The books are checked annually by state-approved auditors. Regular meetings of the Swastha Chulo board and members of the committee are also held regularly in the office. Last but not least the office is the meeting point for visitors and tourists who want to get to know the stove projects first hand.

This year I travelled to Nepal twice and was able to experience political developments first hand. However I also had to suffer the air-pollution in the capital city Kathmandu and was often shocked, for instance by enormous building sites on the road network whilst the impacted roads remained fully open to traffic. During the monsoon season underground building sites and drainage systems are regularly flooded. Drinking water can only be securely provided by a network of private trucks hauling in large water tanks. It is clear that water pipes must be built, resulting in further building sites, but residents are unhappy and frequently call for blockades which prevent or hinder building work.

Building sites can also be found outside of the Kathmandu valley especially on the main highway to India. As there is no alternative route, the widening of this "motorway" is essential. We experienced the problems here first hand; needing nearly three and a half hours to travel 20 kilometres. At least that gave us plenty of opportunity to talk to truck drivers and learn of the problems which they face. Clever, young traders make good use of the permanent traffic jams to sell snacks as they move from vehicle to vehicle.



Anita Badal and I were accompanied by our two devoted volunteers Barbara Ullrich from Freiburg and Dr. Groenningsaetter from Bergen in Norway. For the two of them the trip was an adventure safari. In addition to the traffic jams and street-food they found the very warm welcome of the stove stove makers, mostly women, in Bhagdulla/Pyuthan particularly memorable. Barbara especially found it very moving to see how work is done in Nepal and to discuss directly with the housewives using smoke-free stoves; all the more so for having been an active member supporting the Ofenmacher in Freiburg for many years.



Greeting in Pyuthan

My second trip in early summer took me to the distant kingdom of Mustang; today part of Nepal. This was my first visit there; despite my long relationship to Nepal. Together with two friends and a professional guide I spent nearly three weeks in the high valley behind the Kali Ghandaki Canyon and saw the masked dances of the buddhist monks for the Tiji festival in Lo Mantang. Enormous monasteries and oasis-like villages were dotted amongst unforgettable landscapes.



Mustang: Metal stove in a yurt

This area is like living book of Earth's history for geologists; so we tried our hand at finding fossils of underwater animals which lived here millions of years ago. In many places in Kathmandu you can buy ammonites which are revered as incarnations of the God Shiva. In addition to fossils my attention was also drawn to the cooking infrastructure. Here at altitudes between 2500m and 4000m mostly metal stoves are used. Even the yurts (tent housing) of the nomads are fitted with such metal stoves with chimney stacks, sometimes even with integrated systems providing warm water; something I found particularly impressive. Usually dried dung is used for heating as trees and bushes are very rare here.

In the coming year there are ambitious plans not only for politics in the region but also for stove-building:

- Introduction of a chimney sweep project in Gulmi to improve the long-term utility of the smoke-free clay stoves and to provide the stove-makers with long-term employment in their home region.
- Completion of the targeted stove-building activity by building the targeted number of stoves in Pyuthan. Swastha Chulo will perform an evaluation in the middle of the year.



- Start of work in the new regions of Arghakhanchi and Lamjung. Administrative preparation with the authorities are ongoing. Both areas were visited in 2017. The first stove-maker training were held in Januar 2018.
- In 2018 we plan to install 16 000 stoves in Nepal.

All sorts of support are required to help us achieve these goals. Therefore I end by thanking everyone who supports us, whether financially or otherwise.

*Christa Drigalla*

## **Fresh Air in Gulmi**

### **Health Posts observe a reduction of pulmonary infections**

The first stoves were installed in Gummi mid 2013. By the end of the project in 2016 altogether 13 740 stoves were installed. Katharina Dworschak and I went there to get our own impressions of the enthusiasm of housewives for their new smoke-free stoves (c.f. Newsletter 14).

The oldest stoves in Gulmi have been in use for over four years. Therefore we were especially interested to see how the stoves had held up over time. We were very happy to receive reports of a significant reduction in pulmonary diseases from two health posts in Gulmi.

Here a direct translation of the letter from Banjkateri Health Post:

*Banjkateri Health Post*

*Date 2074/2/31 (14. Juni 2017)*

*Re: Pulmonary Ailments*

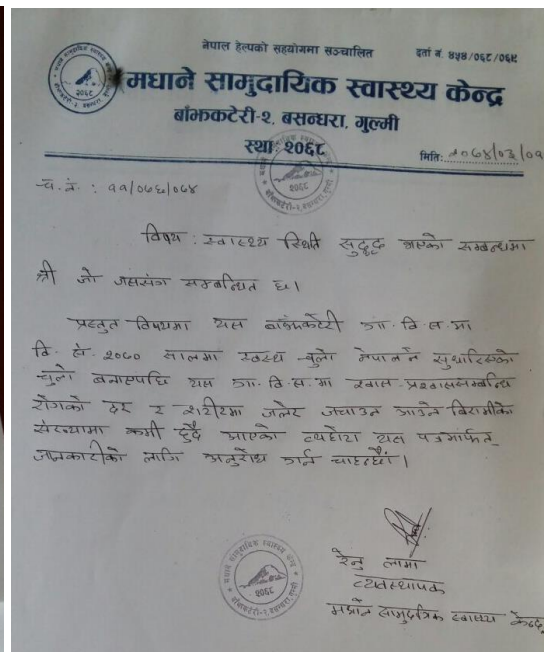
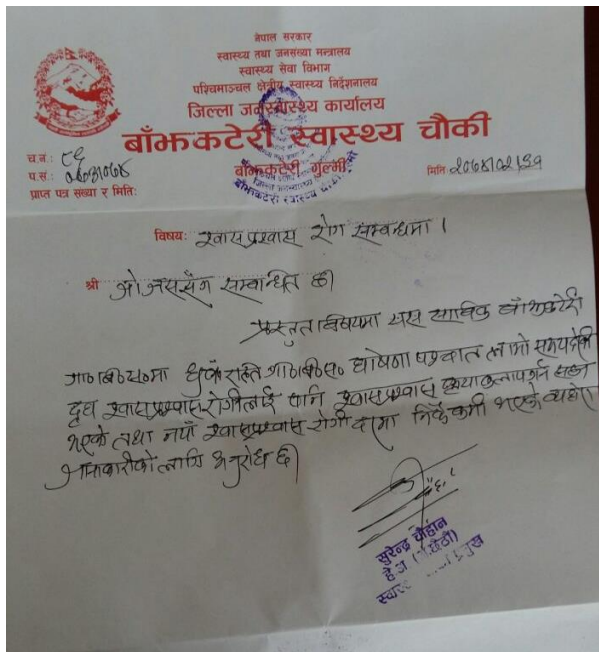
*To whom it may concern*

*In regard of the above mentioned topic we report that, according to a declaration of the VDC, Banjkateri has been declared "smoke free" and furthermore that many patients with chronic pulmonary ailments have reported improvements in their condition and that a significant reduction of new cases has been observed.*

*Surendra Chauhan*

*Health Assistant*

*Head of the Health Post*



The letter from Madane Health Post contained a similar message. Of course these statements are not based on rigorous scientific research; nonetheless they are a clear indication of how our stoves help and motivate us to continue our work with energy and focus.

Frank Dengler

## Hand in Hand with the Stove-Makers Promotion Fund

The [Hand in Hand-Fund](#) is an initiative of the German Environmental Support Group (“deutsche Umwelthilfe”) and “Rapunzel Naturkost”, which was set up in 1998 and since then supports projects which aim to make the world fairer and to protect the environment.

The fund distributes financial aid to suitable projects which help people to help themselves. In recent years over €100 000 were donated to various organisations. Each application receives at most €5 000. Examples of projects are tree-planting projects in Africa and Asia, training programs relating to sustainable farming, food production and environmental protection like



protection of species but also support of infrastructure like water supplies and renewable energy.

Mid 2016 the HAND IN HAND fund recognised the production of smoke-free stoves in Nepal as an activity which it would also support. A donation of €5 000 helped provide around 500 stoves. Swastha Chulo Nepal reached that target in full. In the six districts (VDCs) Baraula, Barjiwang, Chuja, Dharampani, Tusara and Wangemarkot in Pyuthan altogether 561 stoves were financed by the HAND IN HAND donation. 11 stove-makers built the “Chulos”

(stoves) between July and October 2017 and handed them over to their new owners after a training session.

*Reinhard Hallermayer*

## Imprint

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