

## Editorial



Nepal is the focus of this newsletter. Christa Drigalla was in the country for almost three months at the turn of the year and has a lot to tell. She describes what there is to do there and which topics a local project manager deals with: from the challenges of moving the office to dealing with the political changes.

The stove areas are sometimes several days away from our office in Kathmandu. Although it is not always easy to reach these places, it is important to visit them regularly to make arrangements with local authorities and ensure the support of opinion leaders. Christa has taken several of these project trips together with Anita Badal, manager of Swastha Chulo Nepal (SCN).

Christa's reports of the project trips not only document the results, but are also testimonies of a Nepal away from the tourist routes, in which life largely still runs as I experienced it on my first Nepal trip over 30 years ago. Christa's reports are especially interesting to anyone who is interested in life in the countryside in Nepal.

This year, we are tackling a topic that we have been preparing for some time. Our clay stoves change people's lives in the villages in a way that is welcomed and desired. We want these changes to last, to keep the stoves operational as long as possible, and to provide replacements when a stove can no longer be used or a new house is being built.

We are establishing so-called "stove maintenance experts". This slightly awkward term covers a range of tasks from chimney sweep and stove maker. Our best stove builders thus have a possibility to secure a long-term income. The homeowners get help with the operation and maintenance of the stoves and a contact person, if a new stove is needed.

As was the case in Europe many years ago, in parallel with the building stoves, a new job description is being developed in Nepal, offering services paid for by the owners of the stove. Thus, your donations lead to a sustainable market for smoke-free stoves that no longer needs subsidy.

Die Ofenmacher hope you enjoy this letter.

Dr. Frank Dengler, Chairman

**Stove Counter January 2019**

**72291** smoke-free stoves in Nepal

**708** in Kenya

**2649** in Ethiopia

## **Many Changes in Nepal**

**Report by Christa Drigalla**

Flying in to Kathmandu in the early morning. The city looks peaceful. The daily chaos on the streets is not noticeable from the plane. It seems to me that the area covered by buildings is continually creeping up the surrounding slopes.

Then landing at Nepal's only international airport. An innovation: it is possible to fill in your visa application directly on the computer screen – if you have not brought a prepared form, as I had.

Outside, the security forces are trying to keep order, which is more or less successful, and immediately one has arrived in a chaotic mess and thus in Nepal.

My stay from late October 2018 to mid-January 2019 was marked by several project visits, organizational work in the office of Swastha Chulo Nepal (SCN) and the office move. I usually walked the daily route from Boudha to the office near the temple of Pashupatinath and felt the everyday life on the street. I experienced the festivities around the great temple complex and went past the sacred stupa in Boudhanath with the Buddhists on the Kora Way.

The exciting process of democratization is continuing in Nepal. The reconstruction of a federal state structure has started, five zones have been formed, comparable to our federal states, and these are now equipped with corresponding rights and obligations. In the zones capitals, districts and municipalities have been identified and given responsibilities (e.g., for road construction, health, education) and related financial budgets.

This is relevant to our work in the villages, because we have to talk to the elected politicians at this level about our stove building offerings. Work permits and project permits are issued in each community. This results in the need for travel to each area. The coordinators cannot always manage this alone. During my stay, I was able to travel with Anita, our manager, and the coordinator Bel Bahadur Tamang to the villages Bethanchowk in Kavre, Khada Devi in Ramechap and Belaka in Udaypur.



Foundation for a 2-room house without kitchen

The ongoing reconstruction after the severe earthquake in 2015 also affects our work on the ground. The situation in the villages is very different, depending on the financial situation of the families. The official support of the state of Nepal is just a support and is not sufficient to finance the full reconstruction. So we saw many foundations, on which the families could not build further, for lack of money.

However, the government has tied the disbursement of the aid in three steps of the construction progress. Often the aid budget is exhausted after excavating and pouring the foundation and further building can not be financed. This is important as, especially in the worst-affected areas, many young people are going abroad to work, hoping to make a lot of money quickly. Where houses have been rebuilt or damaged buildings have been repaired, we replace the clay stoves. The authorities prescribe an earthquake-proof standard for new buildings. In some very small houses, the



Earthquake-proof design with ring anchors



This is where the office for SCN is to be set up



Interior fitting with separation to the street

ladder. Cross-functional expertise is unknown. So the electrician told us (with a correspondingly disdainful look) that he is an expert in electrical installation, but he would not touch cement to plaster the electrical fittings. This is a bricklayer's work.

tendency is for a cooking hut next to the house, because the kitchen is not provided in the model.

The situation in the SCN office, used as living room by Anita and her family at the same time, was no longer satisfactory or professional. This issue was highlighted in the evaluation of the Pyuthan project by the Social Welfare Council (SWC). After extensive discussion and consultation, we decided to rent a separate room on the ground floor in the same building, in order to set up an office there and at the same time a storage room.

The exciting time of renovating and setting up the new office began, and even as an experienced Nepal traveler, I had to learn a lot again. For instance, handymen do not see themselves as service providers; customers should be glad that they come at all. The post-earthquake reconstruction work means that there is more than enough work.

Workmen turn up in very inappropriate clothing (jacket and suit trousers) and expect the client to provide the required tools. If not, they leave or work with dangerous alternatives. Shaky stools are placed on a table to replace the missing



Finished! Office with 2 desks



The signpost at the new office

So it was extremely important that Anita and I set the schedule and the order of the work to be done and ordered the handymen accordingly. A painter finds it beneath his dignity to cover the floor when painting the ceiling, so the floor has to be laid later, etc.

In the end, however, it's the result that counts and on New Year's Eve we were able to work for the first time in a very well equipped and practical office. We now also have an attractive and professional environment to welcome guests and visitors from other facilities and organizations or tourists interested in our work. In addition to Anita's desk, another workplace is available, a significant improvement.

In addition to the SWC, we work closely with the AEPC ([Alternative Energy Promotion Center](#)) in Nepal. Several meetings in their office were needed to agree on the outstanding memorandum of understanding for work in the areas. AEPC works for Nepal's Biomass Strategy 2017, which says the country should be "indoor pollution free" by 2022 and by 2030; every household should have access to modern clean energy. We support this goal with our work.

We organized two board meetings of SCN, of which the January meeting already took place in the new office. There will be a change in the board next year, because several members will not stand for election again. As in German clubs, there are only a few active members. Volunteer work is not so common in Nepal.



Working with Irmgard and Katja Vedder for the SCN homepage

A decision from a board meeting last year was the creation of a website for the Nepalese club SCN. This was still outstanding last autumn but has now been kicked off with professional help by our longtime supporters Katja and Irmgard Vedder from Kiel. Then Gaby Joschko from Berlin, who has been a sponsor for years, decided to financially support the creation of a homepage and brought an experienced designer on board. So far there is a prototype but in the near future the site will be available. Thanks for this special help!

In order to further professionalize the work in Nepal and to comply with the new legal regulations, it became necessary to lay down "Rules and Regulations for Employees" and "Financial Rules" in written form. Everything has been drafted and is now available to a lawyer for review. After correction, these documents come into force at the next board meeting.

Overall, it was again a busy but eventful time in Nepal. With many visits to friends and acquaintances, including a visit to the three children we presented in the Chulo Herald No. 17 – they are developing very well. There was a Christmas party at the childrens' home and the visits to the SKM Hospital, then the trip to the health-post in Dhadagoun and much more.



Village meeting in Bethanchowk, Kavre

Particularly important in the work on site are the trips to the individual project areas, because only through this personal contact with the village mayors, can stove construction in the rural environment be driven forward. The goal of declaring a village "smoke-free" is desirable for an elected representative. Thus, we have good arguments to convince the mayors, but only the personal agreements with each representative give us the opportunity to help every household to cleaner and healthier living conditions in everyday life.

*Christa Drigalla*

## Project Trips in Autumn 2018

### Overview of the visits to the countryside

Christa Drigalla has summarized her three trips to the project areas in autumn 2018 in a table with the most important information. To give a more detailed of life in the countryside away from the tourist routes we have provided a link to Christa's detailed report for each trip.

*Frank Dengler*

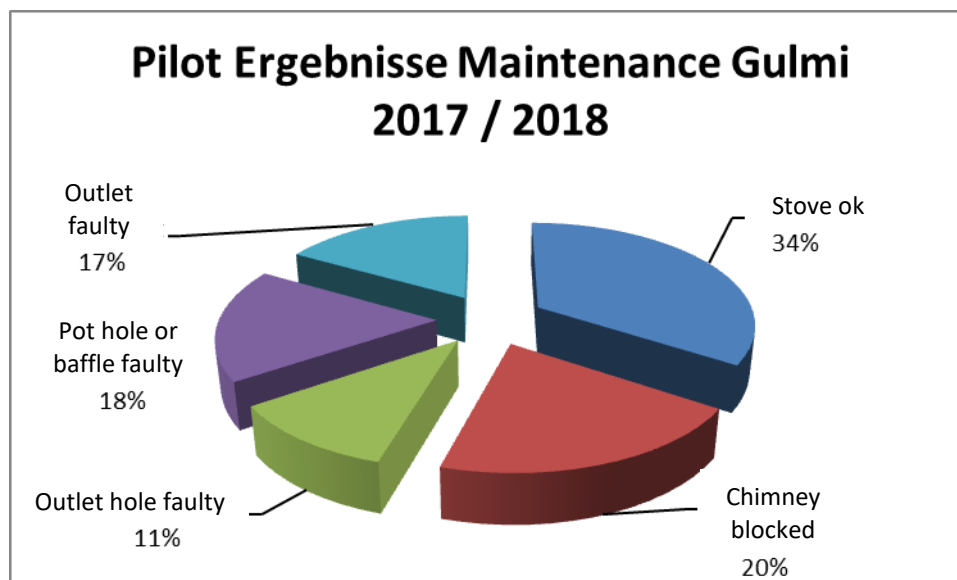
Area	Date	Contact Person	Aktivities	Current Status February 2019
<a href="#">Ramechhap, Khada Devi Municipality</a> East of Kathmandu Ca. 5 h drive, 50% off road	28.11.2018	Chairman Prem Bahadur Tamang	Discussion with the Chairman, presentation of the stove construction program, presentation of the local stove builders, agreement of a lecture at the next mayoral meeting by SCN.	The stove construction begins in the village of the Chairman. The mayoral meeting was poorly attended, so the performance has to be repeated this year
<a href="#">Kavre, Bethanchowk Municipality</a> Nr 6 south-east of Kathmandu Ca. 6 h drive,	7.12.2018	Chairman Mr. Lama	Village meeting was prepared, presentation with posters and pictures. Active discussion and direct start of work, two	By the end of January, 34 stoves were built

mostly green road			stove builders stay on site.	
<a href="#">Udaypur, Belaka Municipality Nr 8</a> South-east of Kathmandu Ca. 8 h drive on tarmac road	16.-18.12.18	Chairman Durga Kumar Thapa	First meeting with chairman, drive to remote villages of Belaka 8 and meeting with speakers of each wards. Meeting in the village school with presentation of the program. Building a demonstration stove, stove builder remains on site.	By the end of January, 58 stoves were built

## Everything still good?

### Condition of the stoves after 3-4 years

In order to prolong the lifetime our clay stoves, the Ofenmacher are developing a service program. Chimney sweeps could make regular "home visits" in the future to promote the correct use of the stoves and support any necessary maintenance work.



To this end, two pilot projects were carried out in Gulmi in the spring of 2017 and in the summer of 2018. This involved stove makers going door-to-door, interviewing the users of the stoves, making minor repairs where necessary, and repeating the stove handling instruction in each household.

A simple questionnaire, prepared with the help of Ofenmacher and taking into account the results of regular monitoring, helped us generate a report.

4246 households were visited (about a quarter of the Gulmi stoves) where stoves had been built in 2014 and 2015. The results were similar in both surveys, so they are summarized above.

One can see that one third of all rated stoves were found to be "in order". Through discussions with the stove builders who carried out the survey, it becomes clear that these are the stoves that are regularly used and maintained (cleaned and repaired).

This encourages and motivates us to strive for this the same quality for the remaining two-thirds of the stoves. It is clear that the repairs (stove hole, pot opening and air duct) account for about 39% of the necessary work. Including outlet repairs, approximately half of all stoves need repair by an expert. These jobs need at least experience, or better a suitable training. Finally another 20% of stoves require services; especially chimney-cleaning.

The cleaning of the short chimney may sound rather trivial as a service. However, there are many old people in the countryside who live alone because the children earn money abroad or in Kathmandu. They find it difficult to clean even the short chimney.

These results suggest a need for maintenance and repair services for 70% of all built stoves. After extensive discussion with the stove builders, it was clear that with these services the lifetime of the stoves can be extended considerably.

*Christa Drigalla*

## **Chimney Sweepers in Nepal**

### **A new profession in the countryside**



As our surveys show, there is a great need for experts who in the long term provide services for our smoke-free stoves in the villages. About 70% of all households, after evaluation of the questionnaire action, have demand for services of various kinds.

After extensive discussions and considerations, we introduce a model for maintenance experts and install it in Gulmi and Pyuthan.

Stove builders who are living in the villages and have been trained – mostly by us –, shall receive further training to be able to offer these services. At the same time as contributing to sustainability, there is also a possibility for independent work and income for experienced stove makers who want to stay in their home village. In addition to building new stoves the stove makers can make money providing maintenance services.



After careful selection of candidates, a multi-day training will be offered. The training content will focus on the following topics:

Training for stove makers in Pyuthan - soon chimney sweep?

- Extension of stove construction and functional knowledge with practical exercises

- Correct firing of the stoves
- Advanced instruction in medical topics, such as consequences of smoke exposure on the lungs and the whole body
- First aid for acute burns
- Environmental aspects of wood combustion
- Educational basics for the instruction of the stove users
- Basic information about self-employment

The project is being carried out in cooperation with the AEPC ([Alternative Energie Promotion Center](#)), a government-related institution in Nepal, and registered with the SWC (Social Welfare Council) to comply with the legal framework in Nepal. In addition, local authorities in Gulmi and Pyuthan are involved and informed accordingly, and work permits are obtained.



Household in Gulmi - future customers

After completing the training, the maintenance experts will be introduced to their communities and informed about the tasks and possibilities. There are several ways to do this: Most of the time, we will be able to use established meetings such as village mayors' meetings or forest user groups. The new expert is expected to introduce himself in health facilities and especially in schools and to ask for cooperation.

The service provided is to be demanded and also paid by the owners. A price list is still to be worked out. But depending on the amount of time spent, the equivalent of 1-

1.5 Euros in wages will be charged for a cleaning or repair. Thus, the stove maker, if he is accordingly active, will achieve an average monthly income, which corresponds to the Nepalese minimum wage. Since the experts, who are all also farmers with small farms, will not work full-time, this is a good extra income.

In order to get the work started and to support the maintenance experts in setting up their business, the training is offered free of charge. In addition, the costs for the owners will be partially covered by us for two to three years. For this purpose, the experts will report their services to the SCN office (Swastha Chulo Nepal) in Kathmandu allowing us to generate meaningful statistics on the services requested and provided.

The timeline for the introduction of the maintenance experts for 2019 and 2020 is planned as follows:

2019	first half of the year	Write project plan, fund-raising
	July/August	Submission of the project description in Nepal
	August/September	Candidate selection, recruitment on site
	October	Trainings in Gulmi und Pyuthan
	November/December	Official start of work of the experts
2020	Until mid-October	Regular reporting and evaluation
		Exchange of experience with all experts, retraining



For the districts of Gulmi and Pyuthan (Midwest of Nepal), about 20 to 25 maintenance experts are to be trained. With around 40,000 stoves each maintenance expert will be responsible for about 2,000 stoves. These numbers may vary depending on the household density and environment.

The project costs consist of training costs, personnel costs for the project organization and subsidy costs for the beneficiaries.

Training costs 2019	Initial training, building a new training, three courses each with 7-8 participants planned	10 000 €
Training costs 2020	Retraining, exchange of experience	4 000 €
Personnel costs 2019/2020	If possible, both districts should be provided by a coordinator who will supervise the work and keep the statistics.	6 000 €
Subsidy costs	In the first two years, 50% of the payroll will be subsidized. Estimated 70 € / month for 10 months / year for 20 chimney sweeps for 2019/2020 These costs will be successively reduced in the coming years.	28 000 €
Miscellaneous	Advertising material, banners, posters, transport, administration etc.	2 000 €
Sum	Project costs (rough estimate) in 2019 /2020	<b>50 000 €</b>

With these experts, the lifetime of the clay stoves will be significantly extended. Stove usage will be improved through the continuous contact between experts and stove users, and a sustainable service will be offered. The project creates an opportunity for small entrepreneurs to build up a business with own income. In the long term, we will fill the gaps in the stove coverage, which are caused by new building or reconstruction. There is also an intention to expand the system to other districts in Nepal, if the concept is successful.

*Christa Drigalla*

## Impressum

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