

## Editorial



This time no reports from the project areas, no news from Nepal, Kenya or Ethiopia? As we work there in our projects the boundary conditions are changing rapidly. The political changes in Nepal are having a massive effect on our work as we have already reported. The developments in Ethiopia since the election of Abiy Ahmed, the new prime minister, the developments have been breathtaking. Katharina and I will be there again in a few days and are sure to experience the pride in the country regarding the award of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Nonetheless, in this newsletter we will restrict ourselves to the changes in our environment. A key indicator for future activities could be the visit to Togo. We do not plan to start a new project there, as we do not have the resources. We think that we have found people and organisation there with the drive and the resources to drive their own stove project. The Ofenmacher will support with know-how both concerning stove-technology and on how to run such a project.

We hope this will speed the end of cooking with open fires. Perhaps we need to add “consultancy” as a portfolio element which will require more-and-more in future.

We were also active as consultants for habito e.V. in Heidelberg. We had an enjoyable day with the volunteers, who showed great enthusiasm building a Nepal-stove under our guidance.

A tradition, which pleases us, is developing in Vaterstetten in the east of Munich. We were once again beneficiary of an event there. The Vaterstetten Choir-Night is special not only for its artistic quality but also for the generous donors who attend. The Ofenmacher received two-thirds of the donations. Thank you! Please continue the good work!

The Ofenmacher wish you pleasure whilst reading our latest news.

Dr. Frank Dengler, Chairman

**Stove-Counter Sept. 2019**

**84031** smoke-free stoves in Nepal  
**805** in Kenya  
**3289** in Ethiopia

## Choir-Night Vaterstetten

Culture for Pleasure and a Good Deed



Vaterstetten, a community in the east of Munich organized the Vaterstetten Choir-Night for the 14th time this July. Initiated in 2001, the Choir-Night has become established as a great cultural event. The event is organized by the Choir-Night-Team of the parish "To the precious blood of Christ" („Zum Kostbaren Blut Christi“) and takes place in the parish church. The first choirs started already at 18:30 in July and was still well attended at 2am the next morning. That in itself shows the enormous interest in the event. The quality of the 12 choirs of all age-groups and styles from gospel via jazz through to classic church music can only be described as excellent.

The program changes every 15 minutes so visitors can take advantage of the moderation breaks to leave the church briefly or visit the party tent or the bar in front of the church to still their hunger and thirst.

Entry is free as all the participants forwent their fees. Visitors were however asked for donation for two social and humanitarian projects: the Neighbours Aid for Day Care („Nachbarschaftshilfe für Tagespflege“) in Vaterstetten and the Ofenmacher. We had set up posters and had representatives on site; so we could explain our work in detail to many interested visitors.

In addition, all the revenues from the food and drinks were passed on to 100% to the projects. This was only possible thanks to the hard work of many active members of the community.

The results of the Choir-Night speak for themselves: A cheque for €6420 was donated to Ofenmacher. We Ofenmacher thank all the organizers and all those who helped make the Vaterstetten Choir-Night possible. We will use the donations to 100% in our stove projects in Nepal, Ethiopia and Kenya.

*Theo Melcher*



## Smoke-Free Stoves also for Togo?

Report from Ernst Weihreter

For several years now, I have focused my energy as a pensioner towards projects to promote the use of regenerative energy in the poorest countries in Africa. In August 2018 I was once again in Togo, working for the Senior Expert Service (SES - „Senior Experten Service“), to present a concept for biogas installations for Africavenir, a small non-government organization NGO headed by Stanislas Afan. I took the opportunity to make him aware of the work of the „Ofenmacher“. He was immediately very interested and asked me to organize a contact to clarify whether a stove project would also be possible in Togo.



Joseph, Jean-Philippe and Frank evaluating the quality of the clay

In discussions with Frank Dengler and Katharina Dworschak it quickly became clear that the Ofenmacher were already stretched to their organizational and financial limits. Another project like in Ethiopia or Kenya would not be possible. Frank and Katharina were however open to provide their personal experience and their technical know-how in the evaluation phase and during construction of the pilot stoves in Togo-

Frank, in the meantime registered as a senior expert, was sent by SES on request of Africavenir for a deployment (to use the military expression of SES), with the following objectives:

- Transfer of know-how on construction of smoke-free clay stoves as used in Nepal
- Advice on the execution of stove projects
- Construction of 10 pilot stoves in local homes
- Collect information on the cooking habits and equipment used in typical homes
- Evaluation of the prerequisites (clay quality, tools and material providers)
- First prognoses on the chances of success of a stove project
- If relevant, planning of further project phases



Preparing the clay

On 26th July 2019, the three of us (Katharina, Frank and I) met at the offices of Africavenir in Djangblé, about 12 km north of the capital Lomé. Africavenir had already identified three members to learn the mechanics of stove making in advance of the meeting: Jean-Philippe Ahli, Didier Akpe Banaa Pouli and Joseph Ntsouglo Komi Sénam, successful bachelor students in hydrology, geology and German studies. In the following three weeks, clay stoves were installed in 10 households selected by Africavenir in parallel to introducing the three stove-makers to the individual steps of stove

making bringing them to a level where they were able to build stoves without help.



Here the simple practical steps to learn, which I present here in detail as they were also new for me

- Evaluation of the clay and sand, determining the required mixture and if necessary additional requirements to the households
- Studying kitchen to determine the position of the stove and the hole for the chimney. Contract to the household to prepare the hole in the wall
- Agree work split between the stove builder and the household
- Mix the materials (sand, clay and water)
- Make the clay bricks
- Build the stove
- Construct the chimney
- Install the outlet
- Train the household on the use and maintenance of the stove
- Explain the health benefits, the reduction in firewood and the advantages for the environment
- First firing of the stove
- Official handover to the owners



Filling the brick forms



Bricks layed out to dry



The plan is checked carefully before starting construction: Frank, Jean-Philippe, Joseph and Didier

Katherina explained especially the long-term health problems and risk of injury especially for women and children resulting from traditional cooking methods in many conversations with family members of the new stove owners, with interested neighbours and with village elders. Her explanations and videos were followed with interest and enthusiasm by all.

We saw a typical household situation of the Ewe in Zéglé. Several related families with about 50 people live together in a large yard around which the houses of the family stand. Different houses have very different requirements especially on the size of the stove. In addition, we met one family, which makes tofu

based on soya for sale in the local market; using pots, which are much larger than normal. That has to be considered as the project moves forward.

In Togo there is next to no tourism and hardly any destinations which could be considered “must see” for foreigners. We visited the National Museum of Togo with our hosts on one of our free Sundays – we were the only visitors. We travelled there by taxi along the coastal road in Lomé, passing and old building from the German colonial period and the rusting remains of a landing bridge in the fish harbour before arriving finally at a beach bar where we served a cold Pom-Pom, an apple-based lemonade which was delightful given the 32°C temperature with 90% humidity.



Chimney construction and lining the stove



Documentation: Joseph, Didier, Ernst and Frank

We used the next Sunday to visit various households in three villages in Canton d'Ountivou (about 150km northeast of Lomé) with Stanislas Afan. There we learned more of the living conditions and cooking habits in the countryside. This canton with about 20 000 inhabitants has hosted almost all of the previous Africavenir projects. Everybody cooks on open fires. Interest in our smoke-free stoves was clear in the discussions with individual families and with the village representatives. To our surprise, we

learned that several groups had already formed to organize micro-credits.

With around 8 million inhabitants, Togo is a small country, which suffers under difficult political boundary conditions. With its low energy use per capita and an enormous rate of population growth (a woman can expect to bear seven children on average), Togo is one of the 10 poorest countries. In the last ten years, Togo has nonetheless experienced strong economic growth, which can be seen by many building sites throughout the country. The stove price of around €15 is 3 to 4 times the daily income of someone who works on a building site; so most households should be able pay for their new stoves; especially considering that the investment pays for itself in a few months thanks to the 50% reduction in the amount of firewood required for cooking. In the meantime, poorer households can apply for microcredit to finance part of the initial costs.



First firing and handover to the owners





With smoke flowing out of the chimney for the first time, Katherina explains the health benefits

At the end of our stay, we were convinced that from an economic perspective a market-based stove project must be possible in Togo. The next step is to come to a realistic judgement of the demand for the stoves and plan a corresponding trainings program for stove makers.

The first check of the pilot stoves and survey of the owners after one month of operation showed that the stoves have no principle flaws and cover all the requirements listed to date. Until the end of 2019, a decision on the continuation of the project will be taken and further steps will be decided based on another report on the pilot stoves.

Many thanks to Africavenir for their generosity despite the difficult economic situation, to Katherina and Frank for their amazing drive and commitment, and everybody who collaborated to help make this a constructive collaboration.

*Ernst Weihreter*

## Another stove in Germany

### Construction of a Demo-Stove in Heidelberg



In spring 2019 [habito in Heidelberg](#) asked us whether it would be possible to build a sample stove in Nepalese style in the intercultural garden of the organization MGH<sup>1</sup>. We agreed to support the construction in the form of a workshop where the visitors would build the stove and thus learn what it is like to build a stove from scratch.

After careful preparation, work began on the 24th of August. The bricks had been made a week earlier and had had enough time to dry. The site for the stove was ready and protected from rain by a provisional tent. A stable protective shed is planned later. Christa came from Pellworm, Katherina and I from Munich. About 20 volunteers arrived to learn how to

work with bricks and clay – successfully as we could see by the afternoon in the form of a still damp but fully formed Nepalese stove in Heidelberg.

<sup>1</sup> Multi-generation house

Now, in addition to the demo stove in Pellworm in the north of Germany we have a stove further south in Germany, which demonstrates the work in our projects.

The Ofenmacher thank Anna Krämer and habito e.V. for the friendly reception, the organisation and the cheerful event allowing us to present ourselves with the stoves.

*Frank Dengler*



A few of the participants with the completed stove

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### **How you can support us with charity shopping**

Do you sometimes shop on the internet? Perhaps via Amazon? Amazon supports our activities with 0.5% of your purchase sum, at no additional cost to you, if you configure your account accordingly. If you are interested, please use smile.amazon instead of the standard amazon website and configure Die Ofenmacher e.V. as the recipient organization. What could be easier?

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