

The Chulo-Newsletter

Issue 11, April 2016



Editorial



After a longer break here is the latest newsletter with reports from the members meeting and updates from Nepal and Kenya.

The number of active members in the organisation is growing. Thanks to all of you who actively support us! I recently reviewed the first six years of the organisation and was surprised myself by the speed of our development. In our founding year we managed to spend about 2000€ for stoves. Last year we spent 120000€! We are particularly proud of this success both on the side of our donors and of our project execution organisation. However it's clear that the tasks involved with this turnover and the projects in three countries spread over continents can no longer be covered by the small team which we started with.

Since we founded our organisation we have been looking constantly for new unpaid volunteers. We have been successful. Nonetheless we hope for more in the future. If you wish you can interpret these words as a request for help or as an appeal to spread the word to others who can help us.

In the meantime we will continue to work with drive and enthusiasm, to save as many people as possible from the consequences of open fires, to protect forests and last but not least to protect our planet's climate. The reports in this newsletter give more details.

I hope they are a pleasant read

Dr. Frank Dengler, Chairman

Stove-counter March 2016 - altogether **45.029** smoke-free stoves in Nepal

Including 5261 rocket stoves for temporary shelters

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Changes in the Board

Report from members meeting 2016

The annual members meeting was held on 16th March this year, as ever in our favourite hang-out Yak and Yeti in Munich. The election of the Governing Board, which takes place every two years, resulted a change this year. Dr. Katharina Dworschak left the Governing Board after six years of service. In an article later in this newsletter Katharina writes about her first years in the Ofenmacher and her plans for the future.

Theo Melcher offered himself for the opening. Many thanks Theo for your willingness to take on more responsibilities for our organisation. This newsletter also contains a portrait of Theo.

The five board members are now:

Dr. Frank Dengler, Chairman

Matthias Warmedinger, Vice Chairman

Burkhard Doenitz, Treasurer

Theo Melcher, Assessor

Maxim Messerer, Assessor

Thanks to all my colleagues in the board for their great work in the last years and best wishes for continued success in the coming two years to the new board.

The fact that we didn't reach the goals which we had set ourselves for 2015 in Nepal is primarily due to the earthquakes in April and May of last year. Despite extreme difficulties our stove makers worked very hard and built 9366 stoves, a result which merits our praise.

Also Anita Badal, the manager of our partner organisation Swastha Chulo in Kathmandu, did great work; not just in building stoves but also in the organisation of emergency aid which we initiated shortly after the earthquakes. Our donors provided more than 30.000€ within a few weeks. Previous newsletters contain detailed reports on how this money was used.

Sadly there is still great demand for Rocket Stoves for emergency shelters. We are happy to provide them but are shocked that house reconstruction is only now starting in earnest, one year after the quakes.

Important progress was made in both the projects in Kenya and Ethiopia in 2015: Christoph Ruopp together with the GIZ (Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit / Organisation for International Co-operation) was able to get the new stove "Chigr Fechi" (Problem Solver) tested and certified by the government. That is the basis for the introduction of this stove in Ethiopia.

Changes in the construction of the Kenyan stove were successful in field tests improving the durability of the stoves significantly; so we now have a solid basis to introduce this stove in Kenya.

We are correspondingly optimistic about the future. We plan to build more than 13000 stoves in Nepal this year; mostly in Pyuthan District, a new district for the stove makers, and for houses being rebuilt after the earthquakes.

In Alem Ketema (Ethiopia) we will set up the local structures to drive introduction of stoves, for instance we plan to employ a full time local project manager. After the monsoon season a pilot phase will be started in co-operation with the African Wildlife Foundation in the Simien Mountains meaning the first stoves of type Chigr Fechi will be made available for everyday use in selected households.

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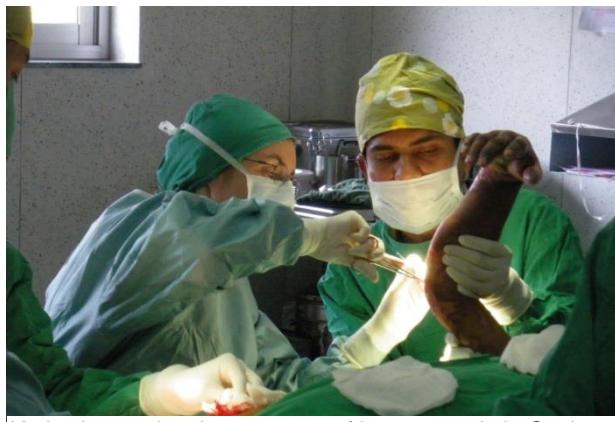


In Kenya a campaign will start in June in which one of the municipalities around Ol Pejeta Conservancy should become "smoke free". More than 80% of the households will receive a stove. Further campaigns are planned later in the year.

Frank Dengler

How everything started and how it will continue

A look back and a look forward by Katharina Dworschak



Katharina assists in treatment of burn wounds in Sushma Koirala Memorial Hospital

In March 2009 I entered Sushma Koirala hospital in Nepal for the first time. It was my first visit to Neal. Frank, my husband, had often spoken of his mountain climbing tours in the eighties. When it was time for my practical experience as a surgeon as part of my studies I thought, "Why not in Nepal?"

I clearly remember my first day in the operating theater and my horror concerning the terrible burns suffered by women and children. It was then that Christa Drigalla and Anita Badal introduced me to their stove project. How ingenious! Christa explained

in her matter-of-fact way how she approached the topic – Frank and I were impressed. That is how everything began.

Where are we today? The Ofenmacher is an organisation with more than 69 members - in Nepal we build ten to fifteen thousand stoves a year. We estimate that at least one child is saved from burn wounds by every thousand stoves, purely statistically about ten lives a year are saved!

What a present, made possible with your help; thank you for your work and your donations! My special thanks go to my husband Frank who has tirelessly built and led the Ofenmacher these last years.

That all sounds like a leaving note – and in fact a small change is coming. After being a member of the board since the founding of the Ofenmacher I decided that I will no longer offer my services in this year's election. The organisation has grown so much that I had to decide between supporting the organisation in Germany or in the stove building zones.

I decided that I will concentrate on Kenya for the next two years. Of course I will still travel to Nepal and Ethiopia with Frank but I plan to head the Kenyan division; so my personal focus will be there.

I am especially happy that Theo Melcher has taken over my role in the Governing Board. We met more than 20 years ago at BMW and so I know that I can hand over my board responsibilities in complete confidence.

Dear friends and members of the Ofenmacher – you'll hear more from me in Kenya in the future. If any of you would like to support activities in Kenya please contact me at: Katharina.Dworschak@gmx.net

Katharina Dworschak

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New Board Member

Theo Melcher introduces himself



I was born in 1952 in Pruem in the Eifel, near to the Belgium-Luxembourg border. After completing school I initially studied Mechanical Engineering at the University of Applied Sciences in Trier. Upon completion of my studies I moved to Aachen together with my wife Ellen. In Aachen I achieved a further academic qualification at the RWTH with focus combustion engines.

As I had the chance to join BMW as a development engineer we moved to Munich in 1979. At that time we had no idea that the work on combustion engines at BMW would fascinate and occupy me for the next 30 years, until I ended my active career aged 60.

With the free time that I now have, I'd like to help people less fortunate than myself. Via our children we have been friends with Matthias Warmedinger for many years. Via BMW we have known Katharina Dworschak and Frank Dengler for more than 20 years.

These personal relationships lead to my initial contact with the Ofenmacher; however the combination of humanitarian assistance and environmental protection whilst creating jobs in developing countries were what finally made me decide to offer my services to the board. I was particularly impressed by the high efficiency; very seldom does one find an organisation which funnels all donations directly to the projects it sponsors.

After several years as an active member of the Ofenmacher my summary: the projects are extremely effective and durable; but there is still a lot to do. We can only reach our goals if we have wide support. Please accept my thanks in advance for your support!

Theo Melcher

Kenya's Women and Stove Making Housewives and Stove Makers

Do you remember Regina, one of our first stove makers in Kenya? Frank and I have just returned from a six week trip in our Kenyan stove-building project areas. Amongst other things we met Regina many times. In the meantime she has built more than 60 stoves; despite her back troubles! Kenyan women are tough! Regina drives stove making tirelessly. She also managed to motivate her neighbour Purity to join her; the pair of them are providing stoves in the surrounding communities with drive and joy.

As of March end 331 households have stoves. All new stoves are built with stable ceramic inlays. The first 200 which were built without inlays are being updated.

Kenya's women are extremely well connected. They build groups for all topics; including for example a jiko user group. Jiko is the Swahili word for stove. Women with stoves meet to discuss possible improvements and co-ordinate purchases.

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We have seen great improvements in our stoves. Some women have set up their own outlet construction with a pretty chimney; some have focused on cement coverings. Especially the older women are enthusiastic. Elisabeth, 90 years old, is for instance one of the greatest supporters of cooking with stoves.



Itr: 2 customers, Purity, Katharina, Regina, Bernard



Elisabeth with her smoke-free stove

Now she doesn't have to stay by the fire for hours cooking beans as the heat provided by the stove is exactly right to complete the cooking without her attention. She is also happy that the ants seldom invade her supplies now that she stores them on her stove when cool. She is convinced that the ants don't like climbing the clay sides – the biologists will have to explain that.

Petronilla reports a great reduction in wood required, even more than we had expected. The women say that they no longer have to buy wood or fell trees. Dry branches which fall from trees and bushes are sufficient for cooking. We noted that their wood supplies are only thing dry branches; not freshly felled tree trunks.



Petronilla needs only a few dry branches for cooking

The fact that in addition to saving lives and protecting the health of woman, which we had initially aimed for, our work also results in forest protection makes me especially happy. That my interests for nature and animal-protection are also addressed by stove-building only motivates me more; so I will focus further on building co-operation with nature protection areas and wildlife conservation agencies. Now that we are becoming known in the Kenyan media we have started receiving requests from other areas anxious to preserve their forests. I really look forward to the work in the Africa in the coming years.

As to the Ol Pejeta Conservancy: we plan a focused campaign. Ol Pejeta is selecting a village, in which we will meet for four weeks with all stove makers in summer. The plan is to make the first community "smoke-free". All stove makers already agreed enthusiastically to join the campaign and our co-ordinator is currently planning the logistics.

That is no easy job in often difficult conditions in Africa. It will be an exciting activity; both Frank and I plan to be there. The idea is if we succeed once; the campaign can be repeated elsewhere greatly speeding the spread of ovens and making them even cheaper. I will report on the results in one of the next newsletters.

Katharina Dworschak

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Nepal

From Emergency Aid to Reconstruction

Nepal is slowly returning to normal nearly a year after the large earthquakes. In the capital the signs of the quakes are no longer immediately visible; though many people still live in tent camps.

In the villages of Gorkha and in the east (Ramechhap, Kavre, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok etc.) reconstruction is getting under way. The delay is a result of the intransparent political situation in Nepal including blockades of deliveries of material from India and complicated beaurocratic hurdles in getting damages assessed and State compensation distributed. In the meantime some international organisations are pushing forward, building sample houses and trying to support rural areas.

The month-long blockades of the Indian border starting in September 2015 have created dire shortages of fuel (diesel, petrol and gas), with consequences felt by everyone daily. At last delivery of petrol, diesel and food-stuffs has normalised but a renewed shortage of gas cylinders is causing problems and leads to a demand for alternative ways for cooking. Firewood is on sale and open cooking fires can be seen throughout the city.



Firewood trade in Kathmandu



Cooking in the midst of ruins

City-dwellers especially have no experience in cooking with open-fires; resulting in a dramatic increase in fire accidents which affect especially women and children. In the SKM hospital alone 38 people are currently in long-term treatment for heavy burns.



Child with Burn-Wounds

It's all-the-more important that we don't let up and aim to ensure that every newly constructed house contains one of our clay stoves. In Dolakha, where "Plan International" is involved in reconstruction of some villages, we are already in discussion to ensure this. In Ramechhap and Kavre, covered by our climate protection project, we will also use our contacts to ensure that destroyed stoves are replaced.

Our work in Gulmi, the area in the mid-West, where we have been working for the last two years, couldn't be completed as planned due to an iron shortage caused by the blockades. In the meantime the county

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authorities (DDC) have registered 1000 additional households requiring stoves. We hope to complete those prior to the monsoon (June) and then return to complete stove making in Gulmi. The monitoring-team plans one or two control visits this year.

Pyuthan, in the south-west, is our newest project area. Initial discussions were held last year, resulting in a large training program in January of this year. 20 new stove makers received training and started work in the field under the supervision of one of our most experienced stove makers. Mr. Shrestha, our new employee in Pyuthan and Mr. Lama, our co-ordinator, organise work in the area, manage purchases directly on the Indian border and distribute material to the relevant villages. The new stove makers are supported by eight experienced stove makers from Dhading, Nuwakot and Ramechhap (5 of them women), who are very thankful to have an income and the chance to rebuild their houses as quickly as possible. 1500 stoves were already built by the end of March.



Rocket Stove production in Kavre

The emergency aid for quake victims which we could provide thanks to many specific donations has now ended. After addressing the acute problems of stove makers who lost their homes we provided warm blankets and targeted support before winter. The many rocket stoves were a great help. This alternative to cooking on open fires was well received and is popular everywhere. We also managed to get 300 Rocket Stoves built in tent camps. Stoves for canteens in schools and hospitals were also provided as part of the immediate emergency aid. All recipients

were very, very thankful for this aid; a thanks which I can only pass on to the donor – you really provided help and motivation in difficult times in Nepal.

As mentioned our goal now is to support reconstruction in areas impacted by the quake to closely that ideally every rebuilt house has a smoke-free clay cooking stove. Especially in our climate protection project area we are working closely with mayors and the local authorities to offer our clay stoves for newly built houses. Apart from the benefits for the environment the increase in burn wounds is motivation enough to be active and do everything possible. My special thanks go to our donors and everyone who works to help us!

Christa Drigalla

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