



Aarohi



NEWSLETTER

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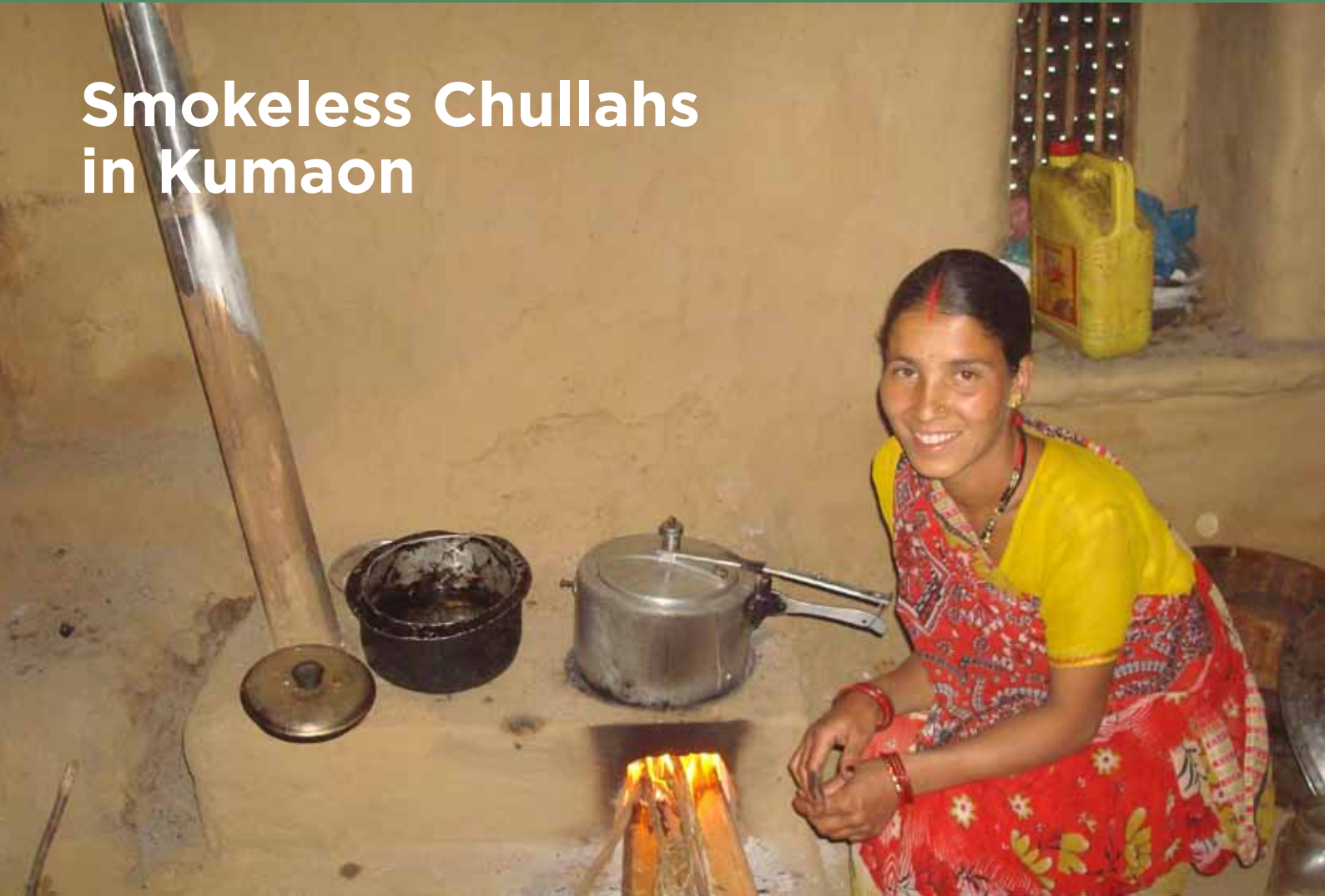
The 22nd AGBM

The 22nd Annual General Body Meeting of Aarohi took place on the 31st of May, 2014. Like every other year, this year too saw a day that was full of hullabaloo in the quiet village of Satoli. Attended by some 300 people, the event showcased Aarohi's work over the past year. Our team members and the children of ABS (Aarohi Bal Sansar) presented their work in a myriad of ways - the health team put up a puppet show; the Room to Read girls did a thought provoking nukkad natak (street play); and the Livelihoods Promotion Team team recited a beautiful poem. The ABS children, as always, presented enchanting dances while speeches by community members endorsed the good work done.

We presented our Annual Review and discussed different ways in which we could maintain a more direct involvement of the members in our work in order to address emerging development needs.

Our volunteers took the lead and helped every aspect of the organization for the day. It was another fun-filled yet reflective day in Aarohi's annual calendar, marking the culmination of yet another year of good work and the beginning of a fresh new year in our quest to create an equitable society.

Smokeless Chullahs in Kumaon



Our research in the energy sector has been driven by the need to improve the crude stoves and other methods used in the region to heat homes and cook food, using wood as fuel. On an average, women spend 2-3 hours every day collecting fuel wood in the Okhalkanda Block of Nainital District - our community health intervention area. The stoves are primitive and not only burn wood inefficiently, but also fill the house with hazardous smoke which, after a lifetime of inhalation, causes compromised respiratory function and early death.

In 2010, we started experimenting with 'Smokeless Chullahs' (improved cookstoves) in order to reduce the amount of smoke inside houses. We built 401 chullahs over three years, but on final evaluation, found that only 116 were in use. The rest were either destroyed or not being used, or had been modified inappropriately to suit women's needs. Most of these chullahs had been built with guidance and training from a Pune

based organization named the Appropriate Rural Technology Institute (ARTI). Deeper analysis showed a need for more education of the users, especially on maintenance of the stoves and on adaption to a slightly newer cooking method. The stoves themselves had been standardised by using a mould.

With the initiation of the next phase of our health project in the same region a year ago, we worked on training our masons again, on creating greater awareness of the users (mostly women) and on dedicated training on maintenance. This was followed up by continuous follow-up to check on the usage of the stoves and their maintenance.

The strategy paid good dividends. We have now built 84 new chullahs and out of them 77 (92%) are in use. Initial studies show a reduction in the consumption of firewood and a decrease in cooking time, as well as marked reduction of smoke in the house.

Nutrition program at Aarohi

Many studies have found a definite correlation between a healthy, balanced diet and students' levels of concentration and their activeness in sport and in class.

In May this year we reviewed the nutrition levels of children in Aarohi Bal Sansar (ABS). In our study we observed and interviewed students, parents and teachers on children's diets, eating habits and food preferences, as well as the response to the current ABS nutritional snack program. In response we recorded the contents of packed-lunches to identify where change is needed.

We found that some students are not given a very nutritious packed lunch by their parents to bring to school - eating only chapatti and pickle, for example. Many children are therefore lacking protein and fruit and vegetables in their lunch diets. There is also little variety in what children eat, changing only with the seasons with little consideration of nutritional benefits. This neglect of a balanced diet is often due to a lack of understanding of the importance of nutrition, and/or limited financial means.

To address this problem we have put in a number of measures:

In 2008 we introduced a nutritional snack program, which provides healthy snacks to the children three times a week

Teaching children about nutrition

Teaching children cooking

We hope that the combination of addressing immediate nutritional needs and educating children on the long-term benefits of a healthy life-style will improve the health of both the children we are working with and generations to come.



FROM AAROHI'S KITCHEN

Kumaoni Raita

Unlike Raita made in other parts of India, Raita in Kumaon is prepared in a very special way. It is mainly served at lunchtime alongside rice and curries and you can jazz it up by adding cucumber, mustard seeds, green chilies, coriander etc. to suit your tastes.

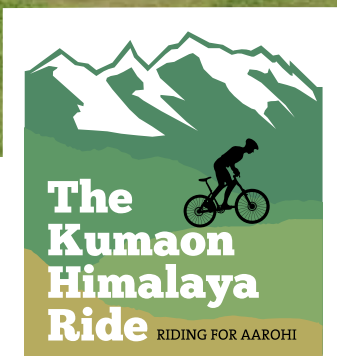
Ingredients (serves 4-5)

Cucumber 1kg	Turmeric powder 1tsp
Curd 1 kg	Chopped green chilies 5-6
Ground mustard seeds 10 g	Chopped coriander - a generous handful

Method

- 1 Beat curd till fluffy
- 2 Peel and grate cucumber
- 3 Squeeze and drain the water from grated cucumber using a kitchen cloth
- 4 Add cucumber to the curd
- 5 Add turmeric powder, ground mustard seeds, chopped chilies, chopped coriander and salt and mix
- 6 Keep aside for 3 - 4 hours to enhance the mustard flavour
- 7 Sprinkle some coriander leaves on top before serving.

Enjoy!



The Kumaon Himalaya Ride

The year 2013 witnessed the success of two Aarohi boys, Rakesh and Pramod, who were selected by our Youth Wing, to participate in the prestigious Tour of Nilgiris (TfN). Their incredible performance at the TfN, that too with minimal training and basic cycling equipment, was a sheer inspiration for us to try and bring the joy of cycling to their own home turf. Thus, the concept of The Kumaon Himalaya Ride took birth.

We invited select riders from all over the world to come and ride over 200 kilometers of winding Himalayan paths over two days along with the local youth. They did this to promote cycling locally and in the process also fundraise for our Youth Wing and Aarohi Bal Sansar. This came to become the very first charity bike ride in the country.

Although a simple concept, it was a resounding success in its first year alone. Held over the Easter weekend, we had 22 participating riders out of which 4 riders were local. We raised a whopping 40 lakhs through the fundraising efforts of the riders. A fine example of how social responsibility can be coupled with fun. The result was an exhilarating experience for the riders and a chance for them to directly impact the lives of many young mountain boys and girls.

This event is also a fine example of the volunteering spirit, something we cherish at Aarohi. Ashwin and Usha Bhatia, Lalit Bhandari, Trilok Chand, Siddhartha Bhandari and team from Walk to Himalayas, and Aarohi staff- all showed us what team spirit is about- it was truly amazing to experience them making this wonderful concept blossom.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Nikhila Nanduri



Volunteered from 1st till 31st May, 2014

“ The warmth and the generosity of the staff at Aarohi made me feel instantly at home. As I worked on my assignments, I loved listening in (yes eavesdropping, but in my defense the voices carry into the sitting room!) on the general banter in the office. Everybody had such a positive outlook to doing work that the enthusiasm was infectious. As a result, on a given day, no assignment was too tedious. I think Aarohi has an atmosphere that is hard to describe in words.

I was required to help Aarohi come up with a revised Art Curriculum and I helped with a few illustrations and suggestions for the Annual Review. I am also currently in the process of doing some illustrations for Health Awareness. I can't say how helpful I have been though I feel confident that my work has contributed to the mission of the organization.

In terms of how the volunteer program could be improved, I think it would be better if each volunteer had to report to a mentor after every few days. Also, by giving the volunteer specific instructions for work on the first day, the initial drive to do work in the volunteer can be capitalized upon by the organization.

I loved interacting with the local community and the Aarohi staff. I think my unbeatable prowess in Hindi proved to be a source of entertainment for many and I am happy to have been able to provide the entertainment!

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PINDARI TREKS

1. Growth monitoring of children in Khati
2. Sylvie teaching English in Khati
3. Team Aarohi ascends to the Pindari glacier after medical camps
4. Kalyan Ram not out at 75 and weaving bamboo baskets in Khati
5. A dangerous crossing en route to the Pindari glacier



WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

You can become a member of Aarohi or make a donation towards any of our projects. You can reach out to your family and friends and talk about our work. You can help spread the word.

For more information email us at info@aarohi.org.

DONATE ONLINE!

We have partnered with GlobalGiving offering an easy and safe platform for online giving. **Go to www.globalgiving.org and search for 'Aarohi'.**

JOIN HANDS

We welcome doctors, teachers, managers, designers, musicians, theatre persons, IT professionals or anyone with a desire to share his or her skills to volunteer with us. Aarohi encourages creative ideas and provides a unique opportunity to experience a different way of living and working.

All contributions to Aarohi are eligible for Income Tax Exemption under section 80G of the IT Act.



Aarohi

Aarohi is a voluntary organisation founded in 1992. It is registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. It is also registered u/s 80 G and 12 A of the IT Act and under the FCRA.