July 8, 2021

Covid in Kenya - Our Responses THANKS to YOU!

Dia Maurer, PT Executive Director

The virus has spiked again in Kenya. Unlike the U.S., citizens there have little hope for abundant vaccines in the near future. The damage has been extensive in the last fifteen months. While we struggled to adapt to home schooling, our partners in Kopanga and Giribe don’t have stable electricity nor home computers.

11 million girls worldwide may not return to school after the pandemic, according to the United Nations. The weight of the pandemic's economic toll has fallen disproportionately on women’s shoulders. A generation of girls can potentially be left behind from the socioeconomic benefits of education access. Thanks to your help, P4P continues to pay school fees for 23 high school students who are now back in school. Seven college students have computers and tuition paid for by generous P4P donors.

A UNESCO report released last year found that increased dropout rates among girls not only deepens gender gaps but also increases risk for sexual exploitation and forced marriage. An educated girl is the best predictor of success for their children and for generations to come.
Covid shut down jobs. Families didn’t have money for food, let alone school fees. Thanks to your help, P4P has provided over 900 emergency food baskets. There are 66 new handwashing stations throughout the villages and in schools and clinics. The pilot poultry project has been a success thanks to Kenyan P4P staff and the resilient farmers. This allows ten farmers to provide better nutrition for their families, pay school fees and plan for a brighter future.

The government is trying to increase capacity. Last week, President Kenyatta said, “The swing between loss and gain in the fight against the pandemic is what I am calling the ‘containment seesaw’. You win on one theatre of battle and lose in another. And by default, this swing has created some form of survival instinct in our population.”

Migori township has become a Covid hot spot, with positivity rates of 21% (when you can get a test). “We seem to have built a national consensus on what we must do to defeat this pandemic and it is steadily working.” Curfews (7pm to 4am), gathering size limits, and burial deadlines are impacting daily life for our partners in Kenya.

President Kenyatta continues: “We will vaccinate the ENTIRE adult population of 26 million Kenyans by 2022. In fact, by Christmas this year, we intend to have vaccinated Over 10 million adults. According to our experts, we will have built a capacity to vaccinate 150,000 people every day from August 2021.”

Thanks to generous donors, the impact of Covid is lessened for our partner villages.

January 10, 2021

Kenya COVID-19 Update
Nereah Obura, P4P Kenya Program Coordinator

Over 91,127 cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Kenya since March 2020. The pandemic has deeply affected the lives of the most vulnerable families. Most live on less than $1 a day and have little access to clean water and soap. The Kenyan government and World Health Organization have stressed handwashing and social distancing, but these preventative measures are difficult for most people to practice.

P4P has been in the forefront supporting the Kenyan government’s efforts to stem the spread of COVID-19. We procured 50 handwashing stations and 1,000 bars of soap which the Ministry of Health distributed in the community. Community Health Volunteers were equipped with additional handwashing stations and they educated households and villages on their use and importance.

Additionally, P4P has given eight schools two handwashing stations each to enable the children to have access to clean water. Schools partially reopened in November. These stations along with those provided earlier in 2020 will go a long way in helping save lives.
Safety of pupils and students in schools is very important, especially during the pandemic. P4P has installed six 10,000 liter water tanks at schools this year. Twenty were set up earlier, and the combination should ensure that handwashing stations will not go dry and at the same time both teachers and students will have access to clean drinking water.
Kenya COVID-19 Update
Nereah Obura, P4P Kenya Program Coordinator

I have encouraging news. Kenya is currently below the 5 percent positivity rate recommended by WHO for reopening. The first COVID-19 case was reported in March and as of October 1, the number of infections was 38,713. Approximately 25,000 people have recovered, 711 people have died. Unfortunately, we do not have statistics for everyone who was infected.

During the pandemic, P4P has distributed 450 baskets of food. Each basket contains basic necessities including maize, beans, cooking oil, sugar, salt and one bar of soap. Recipients were very appreciative of the food baskets and offered the following comments:

“We are going to wash, to fry and have something to cook. May the Lord bless the hand that has given.”

“I slept hungry yesterday, I did not have any hope of eating today, I am very grateful for what I have received today.”
As Kenya moves forward, hand washing, social distancing and mask wearing are strongly encouraged. A curfew remains in effect from 11:00 pm to 4:00 am, bars and restaurants can stay open till 10:00 pm, religious gatherings have been increased to one third of normal seating capacity, and up to 200 people are permitted to attend funerals and weddings. School reopening is under discussion.

Kenya’s President Uhuru Kenyatta cautioned, “The greatest danger is always at the moment of victory.”

**September 15, 2020**

**Health Committee Report**
**Angie Smith, Health Committee Chair**

The world continues to struggle with Covid-19, and rural Kenya is no exception. Food resources are already scarce, the government provides little to no assistance, and people are faced with curfews and closures of open markets.

Covid-19 has forced cancellation of the weekly Power of Milk (POM) meetings at the local clinic. These important sessions are where children are weighed and measured to monitor growth, and caregivers are provided much needed health education.
The absolute worst-case scenario has already come to pass: two children in the Power of Milk program have died this year. This heartbreaking news has caused us to redouble our efforts and put even more emphasis on helping mothers get more nutrition themselves so that they can produce enough milk for their babies.

Thankfully, and despite having their own struggles during this time, our two staff members in Kopanga have been able to continue much of their valuable work. Nereah Obura, who is P4P’s full time Program Coordinator, oversees all our activities in Kopanga. She has delivered 30 tower gardens to POM families. These self-contained gardens require less soil, less water and less work overall than a traditional in-ground garden and give these caregivers a way to provide nutrition for their families.
Charles Atha, P4P’s part-time Nutrition Assistant, oversees our Power of Milk nutrition program. He has been able to visit many families in their homes, assessing needs and following up on sick children. He provides essential education to nursing mothers and encourages them not to neglect their own nutritional needs. So far, P4P has distributed 350 emergency food baskets containing corn, beans, oil and other staples to families in need. These baskets cost $10US each.

The Health Committee would like to extend our utmost gratitude to our tireless employees in Kenya and to our stateside volunteers, staff and all who support P4P’s programs. Because of all of you, we can continue to fight against malnutrition and improve the lives of this most vulnerable population.
August 18, 2020

Notes from the Field

By Nereah Obura, P4P Kenya Program Coordinator

So far, P4P has distributed a total of 250 food baskets. Recipients have been widows, those who are now homeless because of rains and flooding, community health volunteers and Power of Milk families. Many families are struggling to grow or purchase enough food to get through each day, and the food baskets (which cost $10) are most welcome.

July 16, 2020

Who Are Our Heroes?
Gordon S. Jackson, P4P Board President

At a time when our society is debating which statues should be toppled from their pedestals, I’m reminded of a remark by Cato the Elder. The Roman senator, historian and soldier (234 – 149 BC) said, “I would much rather have men ask why I have no statue than why I have one.”

As we Americans keep debating, “Why is there a statue to so-and-so?” I think of a handful of people in Kenya whom I know—and whom I’d nominate for statues for their life-saving efforts during that country’s ongoing struggle with COVID-19.
I think of Nereah Obura, P4P’s Kenya Program Coordinator, as she organizes emergency food packages to families in our partner villages, Kopanga and Giribe. Some of these families have lost their homes to recent flooding, in addition to facing the coronavirus in a country with limited medical resources. And Nereah herself is currently dealing with a bout of malaria, a common feature of life in Kenya.
Then there's **Charles Atha Otieno**, our on-the-ground person who is arranging delivery of our emergency food parcels, 190 so far. Many of these have gone to families who have infants or toddlers in our Power of Milk nutrition program for high-risk children, whose progress Charles
monitors during his visits. Charles does not have his own automobile, so he is transporting these packages on foot or via motorcycle or taxi.

And there’s Robert Rhoda Masada, whose Ogada Clinic is a beacon of medical hope in the Kopanga/Giribe area. We learned recently that several of our highest risk Power of Milk children were successfully treated at his clinic and are doing well.

Nor should I overlook the contribution of the area’s two dozen or so Community Health Volunteers, whose volunteer, behind-the-scenes work is vital to the health of their neighbors.

All these individuals would scoff at the idea that their service to our partner communities deserves any kind of special recognition, let alone a statue.

I, however, am inclined to agree with Cato.

Update from Kenya  July 6, 2020

From Nereah Obura, P4P Kenya Program Coordinator

Kenya reported the first case of COVID-19 on March 13. Kenya is seeing about 300 new cases each day, which is more than double from last month. So far, a total of 90,875 people in the country have been tested (out of a population of over 53 million). Migori has 20 cases and nearby Kisumu has 7 cases.

A new study by Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) has revealed that approximately 2.7 million Kenyans might have been exposed to the virus.
P4P continues to do its important work in health, water/sanitation, economic development and education but in the face of dire changes in the way we live and work, P4P has added disaster relief to our mission.

For months, COVID-19 restrictions blocked the flow of trucks transporting grocery items, seed, fertilizer, bottled water, medications and more. Even though the transportation lines have been reopened and we are happy to be receiving goods and supplies, we are terrified that those traveling from Nairobi and Mombasa will bring the coronavirus with them.

Thousands of people in our area work in larger cities, and their livelihood has been decimated by the pandemic, all but ending the funds they send home to their families. Local markets were closed for months, putting a halt to small scale economies and prohibiting residents from buying vegetables and other goods they do not produce themselves. And to add to these challenges, recent torrential rains flooded farm fields and destroyed houses.

P4P has stepped to the forefront and provided funding for 190 baskets of basic food. Please keep in mind, that in Kopanga/Giribe, we do not have Second Harvest, the Red Cross or similar foodbanks, so these food baskets are truly a blessing. Each one contains 6kg maize, 2kg beans, 2 liters cooking oil, 1 kg sugar, 0.5kg salt and 1 bar of soap. The baskets cost $10.

Another 60 food baskets will be distributed this month to the 26 Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) in Kopanga and Giribe and to our Power of Milk (POM) families.

June 5, 2020

Update from Kenya

Amid the looming coronavirus pandemic, our partners in Kenya are now facing extreme flooding and homelessness. Over the past three weeks in western Kenya, torrential rains have destroyed thousands of homes, displaced over 100,000 people and killed 194. In Kopanga, our service area, numerous mud homes were destroyed.

P4P will supply people in our service area with an emergency food shipment, focusing on now homeless families and Power of Milk families who are in dire straits. The POM program
supplies nutritional supplements to malnourished babies, and at this time, desperate POM families who have lost their farms and food supplies have resorted to consuming the nutritional supplements to survive.

COVID-19 Update

Over 1,000 cases of coronavirus cases have been reported in Kenya so far, with 15 cases in nearby Migori. The government reports that they are testing 3,000 people per day. Masks are required in public (anywhere outside your home or property), and violators can be fined $200 US or sentenced to six months in jail. Mask-wearing and hand washing is required before entering a store or an open-air market. Schools are still closed, and no one knows when they will reopen.

May 12, 2020

COVID-19 Update
Dear Friend of P4P,
“The coronavirus is worrying the entire community and our staff is panicked because we do not have protective gear,” Ogada Clinic manager, Robert Masaga, told P4P. “We do not have enough personnel at the clinic, we lack the infrastructure for isolation, we do not have masks and hand sanitizers, we have no ventilators and we do not have an ambulance to transport victims.”

“Many people cannot get food,” Robert added. “My main worry now is that if the virus invades our county, many might die because of hunger and COVID-19. As of now, Kopanga and Giribe report no COVID-19 victims yet.”

Notes from the Field
By Nereah Obura, P4P Kenya Program Coordinator

Kenya reported the first case of COVID-19 on March 13, 2020. As of May 4, the Ministry of Health reported 490 cases with 24 deaths and approximately 173 recoveries. However, since testing is not readily available and villages and towns are far apart, we are not sure of the accuracy of these numbers. We have been told by the Ministry of Health that in the next two weeks, all 47 counties will have testing labs and test kits will be arriving from China soon.

Most women in the villages engage in small scale businesses, which are usually run in the evening, so the dawn-to-dusk curfew and closed open-air markets have seriously affected most families’ livelihood. In addition, during Charles’ weekly visits to the Power of Milk (POM) families, he has noted that most do not have means of putting food on the table. With this serious situation, P4P has come forward to support 90 families with basic food packages. Each food basket contains 6kg maize, 2kg beans, 2 liters cooking oil, 1 kg sugar, 0.5kg salt and one package of soap bars.

April 27, 2020

Dear Partnering for Progress Friends,
We understand the stress that the COVID-19 crisis is putting on our community and sincerely hope you and your loved ones are healthy and safe.

We are in frequent contact with our Kenyan partners, and we are monitoring the situation throughout the region.

An email from Robert Rhoda Masaga, P4P’s partner at the Ogada Clinic in Kopanga, illustrates the dire situation in Kenya.

The coronavirus is worrying the entire community and our staff is panicked. We do not have enough staff at the clinic, we lack the infrastructure for isolation, we do not have masks and hand sanitizers or any type of protective gear, we have no ventilators and we do not have an ambulance to transport victims.

The people of Kopanga and Giribe are adhering to the measures placed by the government by keeping social distance, washing their hands when this can be managed,
and not shaking hands. There is a nation-wide lock down from 7:00 pm to 5:00 am that has paralyzed businesses. Many people cannot get food.

My main worry now is that if the virus further invades our county, many might die because of hunger and COVID-19.

P4P has funded 40 handwashing stations and supplied 1,000 bars of soap to our Kenyan partners, but this is not nearly enough. At a time when we want to reach out even more, P4P’s finances have been adversely impacted with the cancellation of our June Civic Theatre fundraising event. (We will host a virtual event in its place, and details will be sent to you soon.)

The people of Kopanga need your support now more than ever before. Please consider extending your generosity by donating whatever you can. As always, we are immensely grateful for your support.

Stay healthy and safe,
Partnering for Progress Board of Directors, Staff and Volunteers

COVID-19
THE SAFETY OF OUR SUPPORTERS, STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE IN KENYA IS OUR TOP PRIORITY

March 21, 2020

Dear Partnering for Progress Friends:

Thank you for your prayers and concern for Kenya and the communities we serve in Kopanga and Giribe. We continue to monitor news from the U.S. and Kenyan health authorities and maintain a commitment to the health and safety of all our partners. Below is a list of actions we are taking.

- As COVID-19 develops in Africa, we are staying in close communication with our top two Kenya employees, Nereah Obura, our program coordinator, and Charles Otieno, who oversees the Power of Milk nutrition program. Both will continue to receive paychecks.
• Our local part-time staff is working from home. Program committees and the Board of Trustees are meeting virtually.

• As of April 3, 122 confirmed cases were reported in Kenya with 4 deaths and 5 recoveries. Currently all confirmed cases are referred to health facilities in Nairobi. Kenyans are urged to stay at home with a 7 pm to 5 am curfew which is being strictly enforced. Open air markets are closed. Public weddings and church services have been suspended. Burials are occurring within 48 hours and a maximum of 15 people are permitted to attend. Internet and telephone services, which are intermittent during normal times, are now even more challenged.

• We have suspended the Power of Milk meetings, which entail about 30 caregivers bringing their children to a weekly clinic for food supplements, health and nutrition presentations, and monitoring the children’s progress. We have authorized purchase of a nutritional supplement, Extra Nutrifour, and Charles has made deliveries to 24 children.

• At Nereah’s suggestion, we have authorized funding for 40 hand washing stations and 1,000 bars of soap which will be available to local residents. Robert, manager of the Ogada Clinic, picked up and delivered supplies, since all public transportation is unsafe. We are in frequent communication to see if there are other urgent needs that P4P might be able to address.

• We normally send two service teams a year to Kenya. Our next trip is scheduled for October 16, six months away. We hope the world will be in healthier place and this team will be able to travel. Their safety is extremely important and will be the guiding determinant of the October trip.

• Our second largest fundraiser, Funny Girl, scheduled for June 3 at the Civic Theatre, has been postponed. We will let you know as soon as we have a new date.

• In the meantime, there are increasingly urgent financial needs among people in our communities. So here’s an idea: if in the next few weeks you receive a check from the government and you are fortunate enough not to need it, please consider donating it to an individual or a family that is in need or to one of the many organizations that could benefit from your help in getting us all through this unprecedented crisis.

It is our sincere wish that you and your loved ones will remain healthy in these turbulent times.

Gordon Jackson, P4P Board President