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*The farmer has to be an optimist or he wouldn't still be a farmer.* ~Will Rogers

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### Field Notes

By Seth Okumu, Kenya Project Coordinator

***Once bitten twice chai*** is a phrase coined for those who love having tea with *mandazi*, (a fried donut that is also called a Swahili bun). Every bite of *mandazi* brings two chances to sip tea.

Two chances, so far, is what P4P is facing in our farming economic development project. Under the plan, P4P gives farmers the initial capital of fertilizer and seed to plant one acre of maize. After harvest, the farmers give back a 90kg bushel (~200 pounds), which can be used in our nutrition program and sold to pay school fees for a deserving student.

We started with 10 farmers who did very well the first season. They were able to contribute one bushel of maize to the nutrition program and the remaining maize was sold for KES 14,400 (\$144 US). Those funds paid school fees for Dancan Nyamwanga, an orphan boy in the ninth grade at Magongo Ribe Secondary School. All of the farmers approved these expenditures.

On the second trial with a new set of farmers, however, prolonged drought caused little or no success. The farmers requested another opportunity and are willing to give back two bushels of 90kg each after harvest.

The farming project enhances both income and food security for families. In the first season, Mr. Osala really appreciated P4P's assistance, saying he was able to purchase enough cereal to last his family one year and made enough money selling the excess maize to pay his sister's school fees.

This positive outcome was echoed by Ebba Ochieng who said he got enough to eat and was able to use the money he made to buy uniforms for his three children and support his brother at Magongo Ribe Secondary School.

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### **Economic Development Committee Report**

Economic development is entrepreneurial – there are potential risks and uncertain rewards. P4P's Economic Development Committee balances the requests of the communities served with budget limitations, sustainability and recipient participation. The two most popular requests we receive from Kopanga/Giribe community members have been in the fields of agriculture and animal husbandry (in this case, chickens and goats).

As Seth reports, the first corn crop harvest went amazingly well, with some farmers reporting triple yields.

School fees, improved diets and farming reinvestment were all possible. Then came a dry planting season with much less promising yields. The County Extension Office of the Ministry of Agriculture will continue to advise our project to maximize future yields.

Goats and chickens are inexpensive to raise and breed; they provide protein and reproduce swiftly. The poultry project, operating at the Giribe Primary School, has taken many months to get started. Seth reports the chicken coop is nearly complete and lacks only chickens and feed to begin providing results.

Graduate caregivers from the Power of Milk banded together to save Kenyan shillings to buy a goat. They requested that P4P match their pennies, and the first goat was purchased. Now 23 families have goats, and more villagers are saving their shillings to join the project. We plan to match funds for 26 Community Health Volunteers to receive goats this month!



One persistent request the Economic Development Committee received had been to construct a latrine for use at the nearly-completed government clinic in Kopanga. P4P is pleased to report that the latrine is complete, including retro decorator doors and designer logo.



**Eba the Farmer**

## By Gordon Jackson

**Question:** How do you get a cautious farmer like Ebason Onyango (on the far left in the photo above) to break with the local cultivation methods and join a group of 10 farmers willing to take a risk with the very means of their livelihood? **Answer:** By feeding his son.

When the youngest of Ebason's six children was about 18 months old, "He was sickly," the alarmed father said. P4P's Power of Milk (POM) organizer Charles Atha noticed the boy and steered Eba's wife, Monica, toward the program. "He was in it for just over a year," Eba said. "Now, he's healthy and thriving. He was treated free and we are very grateful."

Gratitude builds trust so when Eba learned of P4P's farming initiative, he readily joined the project. Eba received seed and two types of fertilizer to be applied at different times of the growing season on Eba and Monica's three acres of maize, beans and kale. In addition, he and the other nine farmers in the program were trained by an agricultural official.

"We used to plow without fertilizer," Monica says, "now that we've changed, we got 15 to 18 bags of maize. Before we were getting only five to six bags per acre." As part of their arrangement with P4P, they gave one of those bags to help support the POM program.

Neighbors initially asked Eba why he wasn't using traditional methods. Now, they're asking where he got his fertilizer, seeds, and training. He plans to extend the new farming methods to more of his land.

Looking back on the Power of Milk's impact on his son, Eba said, "You've got to have the right food." Now, in more ways than one, Eba does.



### Meet Jay Wiley, Kenya Volunteer

A long-term friendship, love of teaching and openness to an adventure led Jay Wiley to join last July's Kenya trip.

"Wayne Krafft (P4P Water Committee member) and I went to college together at the University of Puget Sound and worked together for a few years as chemists." Jay says. "Wayne suggested I could work with water quality and education in Kenya." Jay joined the Water Committee, and since he lives in Gig Harbor, he participated in meetings via Skype.

After working as a chemist in the petroleum industry for four years, Jay changed careers to follow his passion, and for the past 30 years, he has taught high school chemistry and physics in the Puget Sound area.

In Kenya, Jay and Wayne had students at Magongo Ribe and Mubachi Secondary Schools bring water samples from home, which were tested in the classroom for coliform and E. coli. After learning how to conduct tests and interpret the results, students quickly saw the importance of purifying drinking water.

"Wayne and I developed a great relationship with teachers Victorine Atieno at Magongo Ribe Secondary School and Evance Odhia at Mubachi in what could best be described as team teaching. Also, P4P's project

coordinator in Kenya, Seth Okumu, plays a key role in bridging relationships and paving the way for our work.”

When not teaching, Jay and Wayne inspected various water pump bore holes and springs to test them for coliform and E. coli. They are pleased to report that three of P4P’s water projects showed clean, safe drinking water.

“I am extremely impressed with P4P’s mission and its work. We work alongside villagers as partners to meet the challenges facing their most basic human needs of health, water quality and education.”

Jay and his wife Susie live in Gig Harbor where they enjoy spending time with their two adult children and their spouses, snow skiing in the winter and water skiing during the summer.



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