



Gaining Altitude

As anyone who has flown knows, after you take off there can be a bit of turbulence as the plane ascends through the clouds before reaching the final cruising altitude. The first few months living overseas is similar – it can be a little bumpy and feel a little out of control, but, as all passengers must do, we trust that our pilot is in control and will safely guide us through.

“Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him.” Jeremiah 17:7

Our first few months have not always been easy. There have been several hard moments as we try and figure out how to live in a context that our family has never been in together before. On the other hand, there have been many positive moments as we have been building relationships with people here, and as we have slowly adjusted to what we need for our family to be at home in Ukarumpa and settle in long-term.

Nathan got to work right away learning the ins and outs of the aviation department here, as well as the PNG Aviation system. One early highlight was Nathan passing the first of two flight exams necessary for him to get his PNG pilot license. Sarah and the boys are learning how to navigate daily life at home as well.



Some of our friends, who looked after us while we were living in their village, Ragitamut.

PNG Orientation Course

The biggest goal of our first few months in country was to complete the Papua New Guinea Orientation Course (PNGOC). For 4 weeks this summer we paused our normal routine and participated in daily classes that covered language learning, PNG culture, security, mental health, and other skills needed for living in our new environment. These courses not only prepared us for living in our context here in Ukarumpa, but also for a two-week-long village living experience to finish out our orientation.

Our family, along with the other orientation families, were assigned to different villages in the Markham Valley region of PNG. This experience was designed to not only help us in our language learning and fluency in Tok Pisin, but also to learn what daily life is like for many citizens of Papua New Guinea. They live quite differently to how we are used to, so there was a lot for our family to adjust to while living there. (see the next page for more details on living in the village)



Our orientation class – participants and teachers. We were able to get to know these folks well during the course and are thankful for the friendships we have with them.

On September 1st, we celebrated completing all of the requirements of PNG Orientation Course! Now we look forward to finally settling into our roles here.

Life in the Village

On a Saturday morning in August, our family, including our two toddlers, were dropped off in the village of Ragitamut. We were anxious and uncertain about how we were going to manage our water supply, not having reliable cell service, and food that would be unfamiliar for our children. Thankfully our *Wasfamili* (literally “watch-family”) took very good care of us.

Our *wasfamili* taught us how they washed laundry and dishes, where they collected water, how they cooked food, where and how they worked in the garden, how they traveled to the nearest town for buying and selling things in the market, along with many numerous other things for how they go about their week in their village. We lived life with them—going to their church, working alongside them in the garden, and most importantly spending time building relationships with them, talking with them under the mango tree and around the fire as we learned about each others’ lives and experiences.

It was still quite difficult, especially for our boys who did not understand this new environment. We did end up leaving a few days short of two weeks because of the stress on the boys. They were very happy to see their HOME back in Ukarumpa. Despite this small setback, it was an eye-opening and edifying experience, and we are incredibly grateful for our *wasfamili* and the many good memories we now have with them.



After church on our last Sunday, the women enjoyed teaching Sarah a dance to one of their own praise songs.



Working in the garden, removing seeds from kakao (cacao) pods—an important cash crop in this area

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Praise God for our time with our *wasfamili* in the village, and for the many things we learned in the PNG Orientation Course.
- Pray that we transition back into life in Ukarumpa well as Nathan starts his pilot training and Sarah and the boys adjust to new routines at home.
- Praise God that the sea freight shipment with our other goods arrived safely at the end of July!
- Pray for rain for Papua New Guinea, as most of the country is currently experiencing a severe drought due to the effects of El Nino.

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Sarah enjoys a kulau (coconut water), a refreshing drink in the sunbaked Markham



Our two boys playing in the village, with many friends behind who enjoyed being with them.