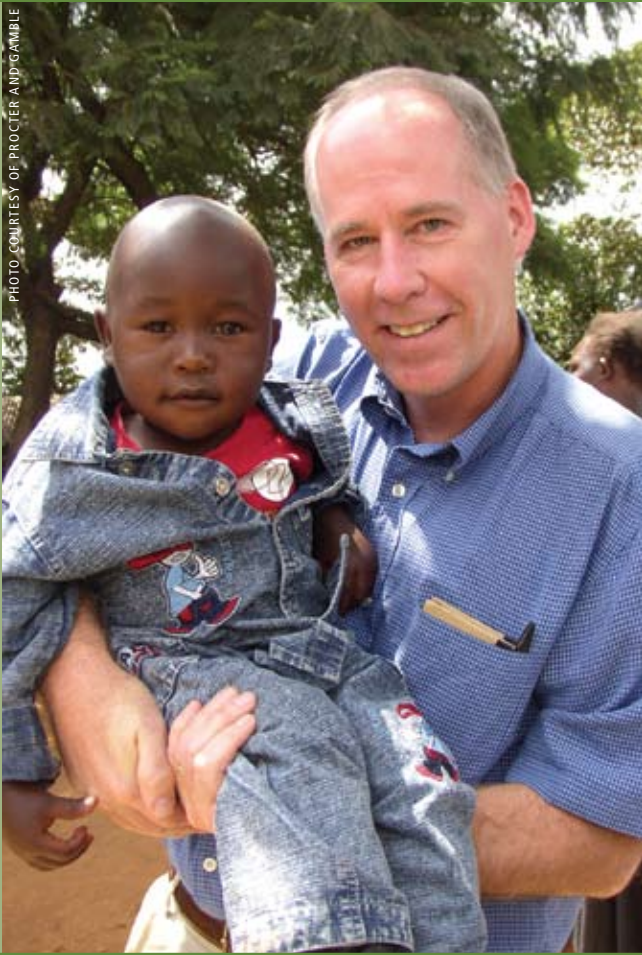


PHOTO COURTESY OF PROCTER AND GAMBLE



A recipe for leadership: Put in time on the ground, and aim high

Dr. Greg Allgood (above) holds a young Kenyan boy during a June 2007 visit to Kibera—one of Africa’s largest slums in Nairobi, Kenya. Allgood, director of the Children’s Safe Drinking Water Project at Procter & Gamble, was visiting a local women’s group that was educating people on safe drinking water. He earned a master’s in environmental sciences and engineering from UNC-Chapel Hill. (Right) Allgood visits with rural school children in a September 2006 trip to Haiti. Over the next three years, the Children’s Safe Drinking Water Project will reach one million school children with safe drinking water education and information about PUR packets—sachets of disinfection chemicals that can clean 10 liters of water in minutes.

In 2003, Dr. Greg Allgood asked Procter and Gamble to do something unheard of—intentionally pursue a product that wasn’t making any money.

Allgood, who earned his master’s in environmental sciences and engineering from Carolina’s School of Public Health in 1983, had worked at Procter and Gamble (P&G) on everything from Pantene shampoo to the Olestra fat substitute. In 2001, he joined the team developing the PUR sachet, a packet of flocculation and disinfection chemicals that can clean 10 liters of water in minutes. The company tried selling it in developing countries such as Guatemala, but found it hard to make a profit. Making sales required an extensive investment in public health education about the need for clean water.

But Allgood lobbied P&G to continue developing PUR, not just by handing it off

to an aid organization, but by creating a nonprofit group within the company.

Why? “My motivation was emotionally seeing how much people wanted it,” Allgood says. During a visit to Kenya, Allgood talked to a woman who was drawing water from a stream where cattle had just defecated. “We took the woman’s water and cleaned it for her with the product, and while we were talking about it, a man came along and stole her bucket of clean water,” he says. “She got down on her hands and knees and begged us for more packets.”

Out of Allgood’s pitch came P&G’s Children’s Safe Drinking Water Project, which donates PUR sachets to aid groups and also

sells the product at cost. “By providing the product at cost for other groups that see value in it, we can expand the program much more than if we used the program to just subsidize it and give it away,” Allgood says. After buying the product at cost, non-governmental organizations and small-scale retailers in developing countries can sell it at a small profit.

Bob Shimp, leader of P&G’s Global

typical approach that P&G takes.” Shimp attributes Allgood’s success to his willingness to “be on the ground promoting what he believes in,” both with P&G leadership and in countries where PUR is needed. When Allgood demonstrates PUR in the field, he’s always the first to take a drink, says Lisa Jones Christensen, an assistant professor at UNC’s Kenan-Flagler Business School who’s writing a case study of the drinking water

CEO John Pepper. “I was lucky enough to work with him early in my career and learn that to be a great leader you have to be willing to serve,” Allgood says.

P&G’s Children’s Safe Drinking Water Project has won numerous awards, including the Presidential Ron Brown Award for Corporate Leadership, and Allgood himself in 2007 won the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health’s Center for Communications Programs Gold Medallion Award.

Allgood says he learned to aim high from at least one leader from the UNC School of Public Health—the late Dr. Edward Kuenzler, whose research specialized in the study of lakes, rivers and streams. “He had higher expectations of me than he did of some other people, and he let me know that,” Allgood says. “At first, I thought that was very unfair. But I learned that as a leader, sometimes you can motivate someone who is already good to be even better.” ■

— BY ANGELA SPIVEY

As a leader, sometimes you can motivate someone who is already good to be even better.

Regulatory Community of Practice and a 1984 alumnus of the School’s doctoral program, says that Allgood’s ability to get people behind his vision has brought to life “a very novel business model that was not the

project. “He is very hands-on in the field and seems to have a real heart for this work,” Christensen says.

Allgood learned the importance of spending time on the ground from former P&G



PHOTO COURTESY OF PROCTER AND GAMBLE