

Jason & Emily Atkins

Ministering in Guinea-Bissau
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Stores of Life by Jason

Nilton was one of the first Guineans we had daily interactions with when we arrived in Bissau. He has a big smile and the muscles to go along with his job as the head mason who oversaw construction of most of the buildings (which are poured cement) at the youth center. He was a really nice guy and he had been working with the missionaries at the youth center for years, but he was not a Christian. All his life he had suffered from a staff infection that caused painful boils. He had been to the witch doctors and tried many traditional remedies, but he had never been able to get rid of the boils. One day he was talking to Jack (an American missionary) and he told him that he was so tired of being in pain. Nilton asked Jack to pray for him. As God healed Nilton's boils, Nilton couldn't deny God's power any longer. He prayed to receive Christ as his leader and he has never had another boil since.

Nilton started telling everyone he knew about Jesus. It wasn't long before most of his construction crew had become Christians as well. He went to a six-month missionary training through Youth with a Mission and he wants to be a missionary to his people on the Bijago islands of Guinea-Bissau. Nilton is one of the many Guineans whose lives have been radically changed by their relationship with Christ, been trained to be sent out as missionaries, and are ready to go. The problem is that the national church doesn't have the resources to send them all. The harvest is ready and the laborers want to go, they just don't have the "vehicle" to get there.

The traditional way to solve the problem is to find partners from some wealthier country and connect them to the national missionaries. However, everything we've done in Bissau has had the goal of the national program being less dependent on foreign aid, not more. So, one of the projects that has been hatched is the idea of hammering out several micro-business models that can be used to allow an indigenous missionary to support his family while ministering in a remote community. The first business model to be tested is the idea of a small village store. Each village has a small store where daily supplies like rice and cooking oil are sold. The idea of the "Store of Life" model is to plant a missionary in the town with a small shipping container converted to a store. The missionary will get to know the people of the town while providing for his family. It is a very natural and organic way for the missionaries to become part of the community and also not burden the national church.



An example of a shipping container converted for use as a store

The first store is under construction right now. Our hope is that we can produce a successful business model from this initial store that can be copied over and over again all over the countryside. The possibility is enormous and we are really excited.

It's always interesting to see how God will use our skills, interests, and education when we make ourselves available. When we left for Africa I mentally put my business degree in the drawer and assumed I wouldn't need it until we got back. Now, between honing the business model to allow this concept to work and working on revamping the accounting system of the youth center to make sure it runs well without more American money, I'm getting lots of opportunity to put my knowledge to good use! We're excited to get back to Bissau and get back into the effort there!

Continued...

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Because videos don't print on paper...

We're always looking for better ways to show you what's going on across the ocean, so we have lots of photos and videos for you on our website (www.jasonandemilyatkins.com). We love adding new stuff, so we've set up a way for you to know when we do. If you have an email address and you want the latest Atkins news you can stay up to the minute by going to our website and signing up to receive messages when we:

- < Add new prayer requests and answers to prayer
- < Update our blogs, photos, or videos



You can also sign up to receive our monthly newsletters via email as a PDF instead of getting a paper copy in the mail.

When you just can't get enough

One of the things that we love to do when we are in Guinea-Bissau is sharing our adventures in our blogs. Life in West Africa is crazy, fun, unpredictable, frustrating, and just different in a lot of ways, which makes for some good stories, and I love to tell stories, so it's a perfect fit! You don't have to sign up for anything to check them out, so look us up anytime.



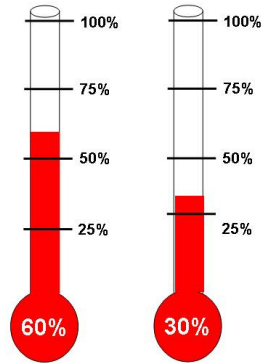
Check our blogs for info on the super-snowman!"

Support Thermometers

We've been blessed by a lot of generosity as we see our "thermometers" filling up. Thank you to everyone who has given, we appreciate it! Please pray with us as we trust God to bring the rest of the people who will make up the monthly financial support team so we can head back to Guinea-Bissau."

Launch costs of \$20,250

Monthly budget of \$4,200



Jason & Emily

Emily's blog: emilymarieatkins.blogspot.com
Jason's blog: jasonpatkins.blogspot.com