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## The Atkins Family

### Making the Dirt Fly by Emily

When Jason's not making sparks fly out of metal, one of his favorite things to do is to use the block-making machine to transform dirt into bricks. Last month, in a jungle village way down in the south of Guinea-Bissau, he had the opportunity to do just that.

Brazilian missionary friends of ours have been working in the remote village of Lemberem and the surrounding villages for over ten years — planting churches and starting schools. God has used them to bless that region and every week people are hearing the gospel right in their own small villages, and over 300 children are learning to read and write because of the churches and schools they've started.

Last month we took our block-making machine down there and Jason trained a group of guys how to use it. Our friends have plans to build a large workshop and garage by themselves. Since the block-making machine compresses dirt into load-bearing bricks, the buildings it builds are very strong, much cooler on the inside, and quite a bit cheaper to construct than the usual cinderblock with cement and rebar pillar method.



*Out in the village of Lemberem, Jason (in this case, a literal shade tree mechanic) gave the block-making machine a little tune up and then got started training a few guys how to run it.*



*Making small test blocks and then measuring the pressure it takes to crush them to determine if the dirt was the right kind to make blocks. It worked great!*



*More training. Everyone was amazed to see the machine cranking out ready-to-use blocks.*



*Jason doing a bit of welding on the ground in the little shelter that's currently used as a workshop out in Lemberem. Obviously they are all looking forward to getting an actual building built with the block-maker!*

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While we were down in Lemberem, Jason also used his welding skills to help out with several other projects. Since we left, they've been cranking out blocks and Jason's planning on making another trip down when they get the building finished to weld up the roof trusses and help install the zinc roof.



Jason repairing the dirt screening rig he made years ago.



When the trailer hitch mounting bracket broke loose from the truck, they popped the box off and Jason welded it back on.

**We Got It!** by Emily

In the last two months the shipping container arrived in the port here in Bissau, we finished all of the customs paperwork, paid the import taxes, got all of the approvals and signatures, trucked it here to the Youth Center, unloaded it, and Jason's been working like crazy getting machines fixed up and working.

In the middle of that messy process, there were a few times when I didn't know how we'd be able to do it. The paperwork took six weeks, and then when it was finally finished, the container was delivered here, but the forklift didn't show up. After that, the customs officers asked for bribes and when we (very respectfully) did not pay them, they stuck a padlock on the container and left. We hired a crane to come and take the container off of the rented truck and did everything we could to set things right with customs (they added a paper to our file, printed on their letterhead, with a false list of the contents of our container, and since the contents didn't match that list, they claimed that our paperwork was fraudulent).

At that point we were honestly a bit discouraged. We prayed and asked people to pray, and even through the frustration we felt confident that doing the right thing was worth it, even if we never got the container open. A friend of ours who works in the government arranged a meeting with the head of customs and he immediately had the lock taken off of the container. As soon as we could get a forklift here (which took a few days) the joyous, sweaty work of unloading began!

We can't wait to start taking pictures of all of the machines cranking stuff out! Thank you so much for giving to make this shipping container, and all of the great equipment inside it, possible, and for joining with us in prayer when the going got tough!



Celebrating the start of container unloading!



We used the forklift to drag the machines to the front of the container and then picked them up from there.



Jason was pretty much everywhere on container unloading day – climbing over boxes, hefting steel bars, checking off lists, and directing everything into just the right places. Here he is laying on the floor of the container making sure the pallet jack is in the right spot.



The forklift hard at work.

The surface grinder being placed in its new home.





Lining up one of many crates in the Youth Center’s parking lot.



Two of the crates got loaded straight onto this flatbed truck and taken out to a welding school in the village of Canchungo.



Crates stacked up in front of the shop at the end of the day, just waiting to be opened up!



How do you transport a thick piece of plate steel with a forklift? Just have all of the neighborhood kids ride on the back of it so it doesn't fall off. ☺

**The Littlest Atkins Duo** by Emily

Thank you again for praying for our family. When people ask why I'm not worried raising our little kids in a third world country I always think about all of the wonderful people standing with us – praying for us, encouraging us, loving us. God has continued to keep us all healthy and safe even with all of the traveling we've been doing. It's a constant source of joy to me to watch Savannah and Nathaniel in the process of growing up into the adults that God created them to be.

*Saxon + Emily*



Savannah dancing with a group of Bijago tribal dancers at a friend’s birthday party. She only danced with them for a bit, but our little African girl caused quite a sensation. ☺



8 months old and into EVERYTHING. Not quite crawling yet, but scooting all around, pulling up, and snatching everything in sight.



Emily and the kiddos on a large canoe getting ready for the 4-hour voyage out to one of Guinea-Bissau’s islands.

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