



The Atkins Family

Jason, Emily, Savannah,
Nathaniel, and Miriam

Serving in Guinea-Bissau,
West Africa

March 2021

Last month your generous giving finished Phase 3 and got a great start to Phase 4 of the funding for the project!

Community Tap *by Jason*

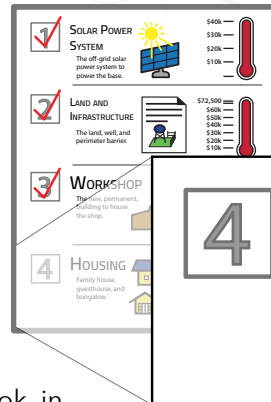
One of the tasks for my January/February trip was to build our permanent community water tap. Since the first days of the well's commissioning last March, the community has come asking for drinking water because they saw the care we took in sealing the well and assumed the water would be clean. In the very beginning, it meant people coming and asking for water from our tank several times a day. It didn't take us long to realize we needed a "self-serve" method of sharing our water that also made sure the community didn't empty the 1,000 gallon tank and leave none for our work.

A few weeks later, we moved the water tank over to the piece of land where we'd eventually build the water tower, and ratchet-strapped a temporary faucet to the side of the tank for the community, a faucet that can only access the water in the top half of the tank. That solution has worked well enough since, but has a couple of drawbacks. First, people generally come with (several) five gallon jugs to fill, and the inevitable bit of spilled water means the area around the tank has been perpetually muddy and attracts neighborhood pigs looking for a shady place to wallow. Second, the multi-turn tap is constantly being overtightened and now leaks. This is incredibly common among community watering taps in Guinea-Bissau. If you find one that's not leaking, it's probably because there's no water left! If the tank is ever empty, this type is also often left on, so that when the pump does start filling the tank again, the water just drains onto the ground and the tank never fills. Finally, as we prepared to build the 20' tall water tower the tank will permanently live on top of, the faucet strapped to the side of the tank wouldn't be accessible anymore.



After a bit of planning, we went to work building a solution that would not only allow our neighborhood to get drinking water, but could also serve as a prototype for a way of doing this that doesn't constantly leak and can't be left open as someone walks away. The key to longevity was to hide the faucet mechanism and make sure it couldn't be overtightened. I think we've found a perfect solution. The heart of the system is a leftover spring-loaded valve from the COVID handwashing station project. The valve is pushed by a button on the outside of the watering point. The button can't press on the valve too hard (it's stopped by the wall) and since it turns off by being spring-loaded, no one can try to overtighten it. Short of knocking the whole concrete structure down, there's very

little a user can do to break it. Of course, being different than the standard faucet that people are used to, we've seen several people looking it over while trying to spin the knob to turn the water on, but word travels fast, and the neighborhood seems to have figured it out now! We were even able to divert the water that will spill to a drain to irrigate some papaya trees and banana plants, both of which like lots of water!



New Base Fundraising Progress



Community Tap (cont'd) *by Jason*



I also added a water meter to the watering point out of curiosity. My suspicion is that the community is going to use more water from our well than we are, haha! We're glad to have something to share with our neighbors that will improve their health. Thank you for blessing us with the resources that allow us to be a blessing!



I was able to leave with the tap fully functional, though it's lacking its finishing. Once we're sure it doesn't develop any leaks, the lid will be leveled and sealed, the structure will be painted, and the bottom of the catch pan tiled.

Family Update *by Emily*

At the end of last year, we decided to have the kids and I remain in the U.S. to help my dad care for my mom while Jason took a two-month trip back to Guinea-Bissau to keep construction going at the project site. Once again, I just have to say how grateful I am for our flexible kids. They have adjusted so well, settling into a great homeschool routine, spending lots of time snuggling with my mom, doing yard work with my dad, and just being helpful in general. They have also had a lot of extra time with their aunts, uncles, and cousins (who they normally only get to see every other year), as my sisters and their kids have been here several times over the past few months.

My mom is getting weaker as the cancer progresses, and it has been a blessing for me to be able to help her in such a practical way, and for our family to be able to spend time with my parents every day.

Jason arrived back in the U.S. on March 1st. His trip to Guinea-Bissau went really well, and he was able to keep several different projects going that have continued since he got back to America. God has really brought such a talented, motivated team of Guineans to work alongside of us, and their passion and dedication to the project has been so inspiring. Because of them, Jason has been able to continue to manage the construction remotely and the work is moving forward.

Thank you for all of your prayers for my parents, Jason's trip, and me and the kids. Even in the middle of lots of change, I can see God working so clearly in our family and our ministry, freeing me to be present right where He currently has me.



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with "Atkins" in the memo.