



The Atkins Family

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Serving in Guinea-Bissau,
West Africa

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Our shipping container of
equipment and supplies
has arrived!!

Shipping Container Day! *by Jason*

It's been an exciting and busy 2023 for us so far! Last month we told you about the short-term team from Simpson Park Camp that came to help us with construction. The day after they flew out, our shipping container was released from port and brought to us in Canchungo! Though last time we purchased the container to use as storage, this one was rented, so we had to unload everything from inside with it still on the truck. The loading process in Michigan (though still exhausting) had the advantage that there was a loading dock so forklifts could drive in and out. On this end, there isn't, so we had to get creative! A lot of planning and care went into the order things were packed into the container so that we'd be able to unload on this end.



Our first look inside the container on this side of the Atlantic!

The first order of business, after unloading a bunch of loose stuff by hand, was to get the skid steer out of the container. It weighs 7,300 pounds (more than our half-ton pickup), and needed to get down from a height of about 4'. After evaluating the available options, my guys had set to work in the weeks prior creating a sort of unloading ramp out of a termite mound. The mound was about 8' tall, so they cut off the top half, filled it in with packed dirt, added more dirt around it to widen it and give it an incline off the back, and then we traversed steel beams to act like railroad ties just in case there

were any soft spots that the skid steer might want to sink into. Fortunately, with the container

trailer backed up to the mound-ramp, the skid steer was able to back right out of the container and down! I was holding my breath, but it went great!

The rest of the unloading process consisted of a mix of my construction guys unloading loose stuff by hand and using pallet jacks to bring crates and machines to the mouth of the container, where the newly unloaded Cat lifted them down and stored them in our garage/storage building. It was a long afternoon/evening, but everyone worked hard and no one was injured and no equipment damaged. Praise God! A few weeks later, we're still working to get everything put away (while trying to (cont'd)



We had a few things to unload by hand before we got to the Caterpillar.



Caterpillar vs. Termite! The skid steer was able to back right out of the container and down our reinforced termite mound! What a sigh of relief!

Shipping Container Day! (cont'd) by Jason

(...) keep the termites out of anything wood or cardboard!) and move the stuff that our partner organizations included to them in Bissau, but as I look around and see all of the supplies, tools, and equipment that arrived, I feel like the project advanced many months in one day! Thank you to all of you who were a part of sending the container!



The skid steer made the rest of the unloading possible. This old 1,000 pound cement mixer would've been a challenge without it!

We'd mentioned previously that the recent removal of the non-profit import tax exemption in Guinea-Bissau was an area of concern. In the end, the taxes on the container were around \$10,000 (a final total is still coming from the partner organization that handled the documents), with our share being around 2/3. While I would certainly have preferred to be able to use that money for construction or ministry programs, we are thankful that it wasn't the \$50,000 that we initially feared it could be. And after all of the deals we got on purchasing the stuff in the U.S., we will still save a ton of money on construction even factoring the taxes into the equation. Thank you for your prayer on this issue.



20+ crates and many peices of new-to-us equipment were all unloaded into the evening.



Weeks later, we're only now nearing the end of the process of sorting and organizing everything that came in the container. It's taken over most of the construction storage / garage building, which we've been thankful to have during the process!



A total of five truck trips were required to get all of the material our partner ministries had sent to them. Here we're unloading almost 1,000 cardboard boxes at the drinking water filter factory that will be used for filter retail packaging!



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