



The Atkins Family

Jason, Emily, Savannah,
Nathaniel, and Miriam

Serving in Guinea-Bissau,
West Africa

April 2025

Shipping container
arrived and was
safely unloaded!

Container Arrives! *by Jason*

Though we initially expected the shipping container we sent from Michigan in December to arrive in Guinea-Bissau in late January, several shipping delays in the ocean part of the trip pushed the arrival date back to April. Fortunately, once it did finally arrive in port, the process of getting it released was fairly quick. Unfortunately, it was quick because the part of that paperwork which usually creates delay is the approval of the non-profit import tax exemption, which was revoked nation-wide a few years ago. So, the container was released more quickly but that came at the cost of a pretty significant tax bill that non-profits are no longer exempted from.

The container loading day was really long, and I had been thinking hard about it for months. On one hand, we have more manual labor help on this end. On the other hand, several of the machines in the container were heavy enough to have been a challenge loading back in December even with a loading dock and forklift, neither of which were available here! The tractor is a huge help moving things around, but its ~1,900 pound capacity made it unable to lift at least three of the machines and questionable on a (cont'd)



The lion's share of the contents of the container were packed in crates and unloaded easily by the tractor.



For the three machines that the tractor couldn't lift however, the story was different. The machines were jacked up onto machinery skates inside the container and then slowly rolled down the dock plate onto the trailer with the help of a chainfall attached inside the container to control the decent. Once onto the trailer, the machines were tied down, driven into the shop under the crane, lifted, and then let down to the ground once the trailer was pulled out of the way. The ironworker, however, at 5,000 pounds, was too heavy for the crane and had to also be skated off of the trailer down the dock plate and onto a ramp to get to the ground. We were very happy to have it on solid concrete—and to never have to lift it again!



Container Arrives! (cont'd) *by Jason*

(...) fourth. I spent quite a bit of time coming up with a plan I thought would work, but you never know for sure until you get 5,000 pounds of iron moving if your plan is solid or not.

Fortunately, thanks to help from our workers and several friends, good equipment, and a good plan (if I do say so myself), we were successfully able to unload the entire 45,000 pounds of cargo without anyone or anything getting hurt. You never know exactly what you're going to find inside a container that's been sailing for months, but nothing had broken loose of its tiedowns, and the worst thing we found was some pretty significant humidity, which doesn't seem to have claimed any casualties other than a computer that controls one of the machines, unfortunately.

A week later we loaded the crates of material sent by our partner,



Above: We stuck cargo everywhere, but it was a huge blessing to have a nice big floor to be able to move things around on!

W A V S ,
on the
t r u c k

they'd hired to come out to Canchungo to get it. Our garage is currently stuffed to the gills with crates, and several machines are tarped on the new shop floor as we work to get a roof built over them before the first rains in May or June!



My guys (and a few friends who came to lend a hand) killed it on unloading day despite the heat and exhaustion!



We'd like to express a heartfelt thanks to all who helped in the container process! It's a big job, and I'm always sure I never want to do it again in the middle of it, but as I look around at all of the new shop capabilities and building supplies that arrived, it starts to feel more worth it!

Left: Nathaniel supervises as we roll the ironworker down from the trailer. Huge sigh of relief once it was safely on the ground!

Block Maker Lives *by Jason*

One of the exciting things that arrived in the container, which we put to work almost immediately, was a brand-new diesel motor for the block making machine. The original motor on the 16-year-old machine had reached the end of reparability. Jim Redyke insisted on sending us a new one. Days after the container arrived we had the motor installed and were making blocks again, needing to make enough to finish the section of the shop that we're trying to roof before the rains.



Amadu and Upa installed the block maker's brand new motor and it's running great!



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