

Andrea and Mark Hotchkin

Bardai Brief

August 2021



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Dear Friends

This Sunday Mark has been asked to preach at church. He has decided to use the story of the woman at the well and the life-giving water Jesus offers and this got us thinking about how important water is especially here in the Tibesti.

Normally the town's water supply comes from under the town from a very deep source under the rocks not really affected by rainfall. It is usually pumped around the town for a few hours two or three times a week. Unfortunately since our return, although all had been functioning normally the week before, no water has been pumped. Not even during the recent Tabaski celebrations or on the three wedding days, when normally the town pump would run most of the day to provide for the needs for all the guests. There are usually well over 150 people, many coming from Libya for the occasion. So what does this mean for us? Well first of all we have found out that we use around 1000 Litres of water a week, for drinking, cooking, washing up hand washing clothes and watering the garden – this apparently compares with an average of around 2000 Litres for 2 people in the UK, so it's not too bad. We have been getting this delivered each week on a Saturday by pick-up from a neighbour's well down in the Wadi. He uses a small electric pump to transfer it from his tank to our barrels and it's very efficient. It also means regular contact with our neighbour and even a cup of coffee shared once the delivery is made-almost a conversation at the well.

So as this lack of regular water supply continues, what are the long term solutions for our Oasis in the desert? How do people manage when there is no water in the pipes?

For years before the town system was in place people used very simple shallow open wells in the Wadi which filled each year by the rain from the mountains.

The water in the wadi floor used to be very close to the surface but now is at around 5m depth and people are drilling their own tube wells down to 9m, using a simple hand powered rig. This includes some members of our team who with help have drilled a well 9m deep near to their house and these will be a permanent source of water for our team whenever other sources fail. It was not easy as they had the frustrating experience of hitting rock at 7m and so had to start again. This is the same near surface source of water that we use from our neighbour's well and it depends on a regular refilling each year from the rains on the mountains. Although this year there has been much rain and even spectacular and incongruous waterfalls in parts of the Tibesti. Bardai has had only a few drops of water so we pray for regular rains so the wells can continue to function. Meanwhile a group supported by the German government are providing a new generator and repairing the leaky pipes so the town supply can function and water can be pumped regularly.

The hospital has its own water supply and although they use the generator to pump the water (something we hope to change soon with a solar pump) it does mean we always have water. About 7 years ago trees were planted and the hospital caretaker sees it as his responsibility to trim them to strengthen the trunks for when the strong winds come and water them regularly. Recently he even planted a fair number of new ones. The mature trees look great and provide good shade as well as food for the goats when they are cropped. It is interesting to see what can be achieved when someone takes responsibility. We are hoping that this can be a picture of the future of the hospital, individuals taking responsibility for making things work. For example a new Gene expert machine that was delivered this week by the Ministry of Health.

This has been sent to perform Covid -19 PCRs but the same apparatus can be used to detect other organisms and it arrived with kits to check for Tuberculosis and to measure the level of virus and hence response to treatment for HIV. It is an expensive but extremely useful machine and we pray it will receive the same care and attention as the trees.



At home, we have been enjoying watching the garden grow thanks to all our waste water and more besides. It attracts birds and some insects. Andrea however did not enjoy getting stung by a scorpion which was presumably looking for water last night. Her foot is now improving after a painful night and we are grateful for the anti-scorpion venom available free at the hospital.

Rebecca has started medical school again and is enjoying herself and Ruth will start at the end of the month her international development Masters. The beginning of next month is the wedding of our niece in London which we are again sad to miss, happily Ruth and Rebecca will be there.



Praise

For water.

For the arrival of a supply of free medicines and the organisation of a pharmacy order by our administrator at Ndjamena.

The house now fully repaired.

The new Gene-Expert machine.

Prayer

The town supply of water to start functioning well.
Regular replenishing rains.

The nurses to develop the enthusiasm and interest to provide good care.

Continued development of relationships with the director and area health director who have been away at meetings.

Thank-you for your prayers for water in the Tibesti. May God enable us to share his life giving water with those we meet here in Bardai and all those you meet each day.

Mark and Andrea

If you would like to support Andrea and Mark Hotchkin by prayer and committed regular giving, visit bmsworldmission.org/partners or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.



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