

BOWIER TRUST FOUNDATION SWITZERLAND (BTFS) FELIX F. WALZ

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Water kiosk in Liberia is successfully operated by local staff / touching interview on site



Felix F. Walz and Laryee A. Sannor (Bob) from BTFS with Tenneh (left) und Tarpeh.

With professional help from the Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences OST in Rapperswil, a water kiosk with solar technology was retrofitted at SD Cooper Road, Paynesville, outside the capital of Monrovia at the Immanuel School ICA and Church. The system supplies many people with bacteria-free drinking water and is operated by local staff. In a touching interview, the two operators gave information on how they got into their work and even gave a personal insight into their not easy life.



Tenneh, 22 years old, mother of two children (boy 7 years and girl 5 years), single, living with her parents in the Divine community together with four other siblings. She has had a typically child pregnancy background of which can only be speculated. Tenneh has a primary school education and is currently completing her 10th grade at the Carver Mission School. She has been operating the water pump at the BTFS water kiosk since December 2020 and is satisfied with her monthly wages - Tenneh is the only one in the family who can contribute to the family upbringing. BTFS Chief Operations "Bob" was able to achieve with the school board that Tenneh's two children are admitted to classes without having to pay school fees.



Tarpeh, 25 years old, single father of a 5-year old handicapped girl and nobody knows what kind of illness the child has. He lives alone in the nearby Gbarbo town community and his mother looks after the child. Tarpeh is employed by the ICA School and Church as a "house electrician" and for IT matters and receives a small monthly wage. Note: Neither the school nor the church have working computers. Since BTFS upgraded the water kiosk system with solar power, Tarpeh has been checking the electrical system every day. As soon as possible, he would like to go back to university and complete his studies as an electrical engineer.

On-site interview at the water kiosk by Felix F. Walz, BTFS Switzerland

2. Who has hired you?

Tenneh: The previous man who operated the pump left that job and made a recommendation to Festus to consider me as the man's successor and working at the water tower. That was in December 2020. Since then I am on a daily basis at the water Kiosk, selling water to people

Tarpeh: Bob has asked me to work with him on new Installations, pertaining the newly installed Solar-System to power the water pump and the flood-lights at the Church

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3. Have you received instructions or Training how to do your business?

Tenneh: Yes – Bob gave me instructions how to do the job

Tarpeh: Yes- Bob

4. Do you get payed?

Tenneh: yes – it is Bob that is paying me a monthly salary and I am happy with what I get.

Taroeh: No – not yet. The school is paying me a monthly salary

5. How much water is being sold on a daily basis?

Tenneh: a regular day – I can't tell – it is varying – because it depends, if LWSC is on or not. When it's not on, the Water selling is high. (Bob – average usage of water is between three to five cubic meter of water per day with a divergence depending on LWSC water is running or not)

6. How do you manage the water-selling?

When people come around with their canisters (5 gallons) I sell it for 10 LD per canister. They always pay. Buying water bags on the streets is 10 L D for half a liter. I got a book where I tabulate all selling's and making entries from the readout of the water-meter.

7. What are your challenges?

Tenneh: The people from Church doesn't want to pay, saying they get it for free. They say the facility is on church ground and that's why they thought they don't have to pay. That has been resolved by Bob in consultation with the board of the Church. Since that intervention, all members of the Church are paying.

Tarpeh: I don't have challenges all is working fine so far.

8. Do you get response from Community Dwellers?

Tenneh: Yes – people say, this is good water and the taste is better than other water. I know people they have LWSC water at their houses, but come here for Drinking water. I even tell them, to use the water for drinking and for cooking only. I can say, people they come here they appreciate the water kiosk much.

Tarpeh: Yes – the pastors said positive comments during Services about the new Solar-installations – and there was an announcement made by the pastors to the congregations in full recognition about the Solar and GDM-Water Facility

9. Where do the customers coming from?

Whowww....people come from far, not just from the local communities. I had customers coming from Town (Monrovia Capitol), from Dupord Road, even a school from far away Barnersville.

10. Do you have instructions / guidelines what to do, if you have a technical problem?

Tenneh: If I got a problem either I just walk to BTFS Office, or I ask Tarpeh to call Bob. I don't have a phone. But the trouble-shooting process is clear for me.

Tarpeh: if I got a problem I report first line always to Bob – the Chief from BTFS.

Remarks from Bob: We are setting up a workshop Training together with Tarpeh and our contracting Partner "Smart Energy Ltd" geared towards clarity of the process if anything is happening. I could speak with the board members of ICA school to accepts Tenneh's two children to go to ICA School for free, for she is working for the sake of so many beneficiaries.

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Remarks from Tenneh: my children can go to school now, and I am so grateful for that and I am grateful to the Swiss Society for their wonderful support to make this Water Kiosk happen. My entire live is challenging (starts to shedding tears) I am responsible for my parents and my three brothers and one sister.

Touching moment: Tenneh can't hold back her tears when she is asked about her family circumstances.



Remarks from Tarpeh: Thank you to the Swiss Society – I am grateful and hope I can continue to work with BTFS.

Left to right: Tarpeh, Festus (BTFS) Bob (seating) Elija (BTFS and Tenneh (seating)