

## News Release

# NGO FIGHTS TO SAVE BUSHMEN TRIBE

**Pilgrim Relief Society has launched a development project in the Kalahari Desert, Namibia that will help protect the ancient Bushmen tribe from extinction.**

International NGO Pilgrim Relief Society says the project was designed to integrate the marginalized Bushmen community in society.

Pilgrim Relief Society President Sebastian Tirtirau said, “The project will create over 500 jobs, provide education facilities and make critical resources available to the San Bushmen living in the area.”

The Namibian government is supportive of the organization’s plans and has leased a 5000-hectare property in the Omatako Valley for the project.

The property will house a number of facilities including a boarding school for 500 children, a cafeteria, a gymnasium, hospital of 30 beds, workshops, garages, a bakery, stables, gardens, beehives, farms and other facilities and services.

“Our plan is to create a small cultural and economic centre where San Bushmen can be trained and integrated in various industries”, Tirtirau said.

Government officials visited the property early this year and were impressed with the plan and vision of the organization for the Bushmen community.

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## Fact Sheet

*Pilgrim Society for Education and Relief of Poverty* is an international non-profit organization dedicated to helping remote or oppressed communities. The organization's mission is to tackle extreme poverty issues faced by some of the most remote people on Earth.

In August 2009 Pilgrim Relief Society launched a development project for the San Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert. The project is designed to create opportunities for education and employment in the community.

In 1999 Sebastian Tirtirau installed his first solar-powered water system in the Kalahari Desert.

Sebastian Tirtirau founded *Pilgrim Society for Education and Relief of Poverty* in 2001 in Canada.

Pilgrim Society currently has projects in Canada (North Pole), Namibia, Congo, Romania, Vanuatu, Peru and Australia.

The organization's first and most developed project is located in the Kalahari Desert, Africa, supporting the San Bushmen community.

Sebastian Tirtirau first travelled to the Kalahari and met the San in 1996.

## Backgrounder

Pilgrim Society Development Project was launched in the Omatako Valley, Namibia in August 2009. The project is being implemented on a 5000 hectare property leased to Pilgrim Relief Society by the Namibian government with the purpose of introducing sustainable sources of income, services and education to the Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert. The property will house a number of facilities including a boarding school for 500 children, a cafeteria, gym, hospital of 30 beds, workshops, garages, bakery, stables, gardens, beehives, farms and other facilities and services. Pilgrim Society Development Project is a significant endeavor as it marks a milestone for the work of Pilgrim in the Kalahari Desert. Pilgrim Society's vision for the Bushmen of the Kalahari was to - one day - witness sustainable sources of livelihood and education available to the bushmen. At present, the Bushmen have almost no education or medical facilities or services in the Kalahari Desert. PSDP Omatako provides such facilities and services to the Bushmen of the Kalahari.

The project was launched in August of 2009 with almost 40 volunteer from around the world helping with construction and installation of critical resources and amenities. Upon arrival, we began clearing and landscaping to make way for the campsite that would house volunteers who came to assist in the construction and installation process. A water system powered by solar technology (courtesy of Soltec, Namibia) was installed to allow for the construction of bathrooms, kitchen and other amenities. Presently the volunteers are busy building bricks, preparing for the arrival of more volunteers in March 2010 who will begin the construction of the boarding school. Plans of the campus will soon be available on this website.

On these 5000 hectares we plan to establish 2000 hectares (5000 acres) of corn and wheat plantations, a large garden with different types of vegetables, watermelon farm and an apiculture farm, stables for horses, corals for cows and goats and chicken pens. This initiative will provide the San people with skills to safely farm their land while preserving the environment.

Education will be provided in the areas of water recycling, soil treatment and organic farming in a environmentally sensitive way. Our aim is to operate the entire property on solar and wind power. The PSDP Boarding School will house 500 students from grade one through to twelve, a kindergarten and a post-secondary school training facility for students that want to learn trades such as tailoring, baking, mechanics, farming, apiculture, etc. Keep checking the website for updates on PSDP.

## Project History

Cape Town university students Sebastian Tirtirau and Dan Serb initiated the project in 1996 by offering basic humanitarian support to the San (Bushmen) of the Kalahari Desert, Namibia. However, as the San began to know and trust the young missionaries, a relationship began to form opening the doors for even greater opportunities.

Two years after his first visit into the Kalahari, the Ju/!hoansi Bushmen adopted Sebastian as one of their own. Every consecutive visit in the Kalahari involved installing solar powered water systems, medical care, donating food and clothing, construction and, off course as a result, new friendship and relationships being formed.

The work of Pilgrim Relief Society in the Kalahari Desert evolved step by step into a project offering aid and development to the entire San community in the Kalahari, Namibia (85,000 people) as well as five other tribal communities (Kwangali, Herero, Mbukushu, Djereko and Kavango). In November 2008 the government of Namibia leased 5000 hectares in the Omatako Valley of the Kalahari Desert to Pilgrim Relief Society. The property is based 100km from Grootfontein, 200km west of Tsumkwe.

## Radio and Television Interviews

Contact: info@pilgrimsociety.com  
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Sebastian Tirtirau will be available for 'In person', live or interviews upon request. Please ensure we receive at least 24 hours notice.