

OTJIKANDERO COMMUNITY TRUST

Farm Cauas Okawa 30 – KAMANJAB - NAMIBIA

OTJIKANDERO HIMBA ORPHAN VILLAGE PROJECT ("Place of plenty milk")

The Otjikandero Himba Orphan Village Project has started originally in 1999 when Jaco Burger moved for a certain period to Kaokoland to work and live with the local Himba tribe. He met Uakurisa Mukajo Mbahono. Mukajo could not have children due to the reason that she have leukemia and therefore not being able to marry a Himba Man of her tribe. Mukajo is also the last queen in her blood line of the Ovahimba tribe "Mbahono" which came to Namibia during the Angolan war. For the Himba Orphan project Jaco and Mukajo have had a traditional Himba marriage because Ovahimba women are not allowed to have children in their tradition when they are not married. In the time when Jaco lived in Kaokoland the Ovahimba adopted him into their Lifestyle and traditional fashion. Jaco learned to speak the Ovahimba language fluently and today he is seen as one of their chiefs in the Kamanjab and Kaokoland area. In 2001 Jaco and Mukajo decided to move permanently with the orphaned Ovahimba children to his family farm in Kamanjab where Otjikandero Himba Village Project has established it's name. The Ovahimba orphans came originally and still from very predictable circumstances of Kaokoland. Most of their parents or at least one of them died due to an illness or accidents caused. Some are single mothers who fell pregnant but not married at that stage and moved to Otjikandero as they could not survive alone in Kaokoland. Some parents of the children were also into alcoholism or prostitution (mainly Opuwo & Epupa Falls area!) and their families took the children away but to give them better security by bringing them to Otjikandero Himba Orphan Village.

The project's main focus is to give the orphaned Ovahimba children a chance to grow up in their traditional fashion, lifestyle and culture. In order to sustain the project related Ovahimba families of the Ovahimba children were needed in order to teach them their Lifestyle and traditional fashion. Our Ovahimba volunteers stay usually between 6 and 12 months and sometimes even longer with their own children in one of our now 3 permanent Himba villages on the family farm before they return back to Kaokoland.

Since a few years already the Otjikandero Himba Village Project supports additionally many people in the local and rural area of Kaokoland. This was the reason the establish the Otjikandero Community Trust which is officially launched in March 2011. The income of Otjikandero Community Trust is generated by various Tourism Operators within Namibia and South Africa as well some individuals. In return we offer guided visits into Otjikandero Himba Orphan Village and to get close contact to the Projects focus.

At this stage the recent launched Otjikandero Community Trust supports around 10 families/homesteads in Kaokoland, 20 volunteer women with their children & 36 orphan children at Otjikandero, the local schools around Opuwo and Epupa Falls with food/blankets/maintenance supplies every year. Ministry of Health is visiting annually for their injections; furthermore the project supports Himba families and related families to our children which have hard times as well when their livestock is not enough to sustain the family. To pay transport fees and all other expenses that they may need. They also get special support (meat & maize flour) especially if there are funerals or any other family occasions in Kaokoland. As well school fees, school clothes and food rations for the children currently visiting the primary schools. This is just a small summary of what the money is used for. Of course this depends all on the income of the Trust account. Additional donations such as school clothes and blankets related to our projects are always very much appreciated!

We, the trustees of Otjikandero Community Trust, are very proud of their lifestyle, tradition and culture; therefore we will ensure that the next generation will also live on our farm with us and that the project can grow even more.

We would like to thank you for your interest and support in our Project!

OKUHEPA – Thank you!

Otjikandero Community Trust - Jaco Burger: Beneficiary & Trustee
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