

C H R I S T I E   C O M M U N I C A T I O N S  
&  
A I D   S T I L L   R E Q U I R E D  
*present*



THE VILLAGE REFORESTATION & ADVANCEMENT INITIATIVE  
TO REVERSE DESERT CREEP AND CREATE VIBRANT LOCAL ECONOMIES

*desertification*

*The process by which fertile land becomes desert, typically as a result of drought, deforestation, or inappropriate agriculture.*

The United Nations University calls desertification (desert creep) the greatest environmental challenge of our time. Desertification is projected to consume one-third of the earth's land surface and affect two billion people. Today it is present on almost every continent, impacting vast areas of Africa, Asia, the United States, the Middle East, and Australia. We need your help to turn back desertification and restore the lives of those threatened by it.

The pilot phase of this important initiative is budgeted at **\$335,525**. It will establish a replicable model to return affected regions to cultivable land and establish self-sufficiency amongst its community members. As desertification is a global issue, your support in this project is an investment in helping people around the world reclaim their lives and create a sustainable future in the face of environmental crisis.



Northern Africa is the hardest hit by desert creep. For almost 40 years it has been plagued with a persistent drought. Regions once filled with trees, shrubs and crops are now flat, relentless desert stretching as far as the eye can see.

With the flora gone, winds blow sand across the desert unabated, swallowing up villages, farmland and water supplies - and causing significant migrations. With 80% of the people in the area dependent upon agriculture for subsistence, this has become a desperate situation.

*"The Darfur conflict began as an ecological crisis... It is no accident that the violence erupted during the drought."*

- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Desertification has also played a key role in the escalation of political tension and violence, such as what is happening today in Darfur. Since 2003, the Darfur conflict has claimed 300,000 lives, displaced 2.5 million people, and been the scene of countless atrocities. Darfur is one of the best known cases of resource-related conflict. It is not likely to be the last - unless we do something about it.

The Village Reforestation and Advancement Initiative aims to build replicable models to address desertification through the community-led development of forest belts, sustainable agricultural lands, and ecologically friendly local industries. This creates a platform for restoring the environment, the region's natural resources, and flourishing local economies.

The forest belts - several miles long, five rows deep, consisting of about 30,000 trees each - protect villages and create large expanses of agricultural land where a variety of vegetables, fruits and herbs are grown. Bees, which are used to cross-pollinate the various plant species, also produce honey, providing an additional source of income to the villagers.

*Experiments with forest belts have turned this:      Into this:*



## Sustainable Village Advancement

As part of our replicable model, we are including other key elements in the project. Since firewood is scarce, the project provides solar stoves for cooking to protect the trees in the forest belts from being consumed for fuel. Solar stoves require only the desert's abundant sunlight to operate and have proven very effective in the field.

To further support the project's overall goal of self-sufficiency, education is another important element. School supplies and books are typically in short supply in rural areas. Where that is the case, funds are made available to purchase essential materials. Additionally, we have added solar-powered computer labs to the program to connect the villagers to modern technology and to the world at large.



## Sudan, Darfur, and Beyond

Replication is a key component of this initiative. We are piloting the program in northern Sudan and will reproduce it throughout Sudan, in particular the Darfur region, and other similarly affected areas of the world.

What better gift can we give those whose homes and resources have been overrun by the desert than the means to restore their agricultural self-sufficiency with new green technologies? In Darfur especially, where most of the villages lie in ashes, covered by sand, what better gift can we give those returning home than the opportunity to establish self-reliance in the wake of climate change and war?

Desertification affects hundreds of millions of people around the world today, causing famine, poverty and conflict. Tomorrow, it will impact all of us.

We need your help to solve this environmental crisis - now. Join us today.

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