



NEWS & NEEDS

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

SUMMER 2018



Farmers across Lattakia have replanted their farms, starting over with seeds and equipment from IOCC.

Rebuilding Lives and Livelihoods in Syria

A Family Returns to Their Land

Tarek (not his real name) and his family lived in the region of Lattakia, Syria, on a farm that was their home and livelihood. Like almost half of Syria's population before the conflict, they earned a living through agriculture. Orchards of lemon, apple, and peach trees provided income. But his village's residents were displaced when conflict overtook the village; nearly everyone fled. For three months, Tarek's family and others like them sought shelter elsewhere, and during that time their land and homes were destroyed.

Convinced that their best option was to rebuild their lives, Tarek moved his family home. "We returned to our burned houses and our overturned lands to start over again," he said. "We started by sealing the holes in our homes left by the mortar shells. The land was the only hope of my family, so I had to revive it."

Next Tarek and his family began the long process of restoring their orchards. It was slow going without the proper equipment. "I began planting a small number of trees with no agriculture equipment because [while we were away] all my supplies were stolen," he recalled. Soon Tarek learned about an agricultural project in the area run by IOCC and Church partner the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, Department of Ecumenical Relations and Development (GOPA-DERD). Giving farming families a jump start on their recovery, the initiative supplied pruning equipment, seeds, gas-powered saws, fertilizers, seeds, and more to help residents return their land to productivity.

As families in Syria strive to regain their livelihoods and way of life, practical assistance like this is offering them a smoother path forward. "I hope we can return the land [to how] it was before," Tarek's oldest son remarked. The hard work continues, but this family believes a brighter future is possible.

Local Milk on Demand

Supporting Innovative Business for Economic Growth

Fresh milk straight from the farm, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That's the idea behind Apo Proto Cheri, or Firsthand, a new business in the town of Kozani, Greece. The company, founded by six young farmers, has two locations with vending machines where customers can buy milk any time of the day or night.

With IOCC's help, a third location in a nearby city will be opening soon. Through IOCC's *Give for Greece* program, Apo Proto Cheri received business mentoring, a new milk-vending machine, and a cooler tank for milk.

Easy, affordable access to local milk is the idea behind one new Greek business IOCC is helping expand.



IOCC EVENTS

- **Aug 25: Denver, CO**
Pan-Orthodox
5K Run/Walk and Picnic
- **Sept 6: Pittsburgh, PA**
Irish Whiskey Tasting
- **Sept 29: Akron, OH**
Akron Marathon
Race Series
- **Oct 11: Salt Lake City, UT**
Wine and Chef's Tasting
- **Oct 13: Greenlawn, NY**
Vespers and Reception
for IOCC
- **Oct 20: Baltimore, MD**
Team IOCC at the
Baltimore Running Festival
- **Oct 21: Deptford, NJ**
Greater Philadelphia
Seventh Annual Benefit
- **Oct 27: Charlotte, NC**
Annual IOCC Benefit

ioccc.org/events

YOUR IDEA + YOUR FRIENDS = YOUR IMPACT

Is there anything better than knowing you've rallied your community to help others? DIY for IOCC takes the power of your social networks to make a lasting, positive change in others' lives. Get creative. Start today.



CREATE YOUR FUNDRAISER

Register and personalize your fundraising page with stories, photos, and reflections. It only takes a few minutes and we're here to help along the way!



SPREAD THE WORD

Extend your reach as much as possible. Let your friends, family, co-workers, and others know you're raising donations for a cause close to your heart.



CELEBRATE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

When you fundraise, you're helping small-scale farmers in the Balkans, or you're assisting podocniosis-affected people in Ethiopia, and so many others. Take a minute to celebrate your hard work!

Create your fundraiser at ioccc.org/diy

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear friends,

As we welcome summer, I'm reminded of how quickly time passes—weeks, seasons, years.

And as IOCC continues offering assistance to people in need, the passage of time becomes even more meaningful. I'm thinking of the history we have as an organization in some places and the opportunity that provides not only to address urgent needs—emergencies—but also to support sustainable and sustained development: longer-term positive change.

This issue of *News & Needs* features updates about where your gifts to IOCC are making a long-term impact.

Farmers return to their land in conflict-ridden Syria to replant. Ethiopian schoolchildren grow up knowing how to prevent a disease once prevalent in their communities. Businesspeople in Greece and Albania receive training and equipment to build their enterprises into the future.

Your generosity and compassion reach those in need with Christ's love. Not just today, but through the weeks, seasons, and years as they pass. Thank you.

In Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

Seeing Long-Term Impact

Five Years On, Podo Prevention Has Staying Power

IOCC met Samirawit in 2013, when she was 10 and living with her grandmother in Debre Markos. She received her first pair of shoes through an IOCC project to raise awareness about and prevent podoconiosis (podo for short), a tropical disease that causes debilitating, painful swelling of the feet.

Samirawit was excited to have the brand new shoes and could hardly believe it. "I was very pleased," she told staff, "and at first I thought it was a dream.... I would wake up at night and check if it was." She quickly got in the habit of wearing shoes, which is the surest way to prevent podo. Her teacher even said that having shoes seemed to motivate Samirawit more at school.

IOCC staff recently saw Samirawit again on a follow-up visit. The girl, now 15, still wears shoes every day. She remembered that first pair and how her feet grew softer the longer she wore them. When she outgrew them, her grandmother bought her another pair, as they'd both seen the advantages of wearing shoes and keeping their feet clean. Samirawit is healthy and at a school participates in extra-curricular activities focused on peace and humanitarian work.



International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC), is the official humanitarian relief and development agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America and a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of churches and agencies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance, and advocacy.

IOCC, in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond.



a member of the
actalliance



IOCC

Equipping Beekeepers for Bigger Business

Women in Rural Albania Learn Ways to Grow Their Enterprise, Profits

From April through December 2017, with a grant from IOCC, Diakonia Agapes (the social, development, and relief office of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania), helped train and grow the production capacity of women farmers in Shpati, Albania. These members of a women's beekeeping association are experienced in beekeeping, one of the area's traditional economic activities. Project participants attended trainings in entrepreneurship, farm-business management, and advertising/public relations. In addition, the project purchased beekeeping equipment to ease beeswax production and help prepare bee bread. The machinery will help produce food for the bees while ensuring a better-quality product that can compete with commercial versions.

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light-colored vest over a pink shirt, is smiling and holding a microphone to the mouth of a young girl. The girl has red heart-shaped face paint on her cheeks and is smiling broadly. The background is a colorful wall with a sailboat and flowers.

SAVE THE DATE | NOVEMBER 18, 2018

IOCC SUNDAY

- **CLERGY:** Announce IOCC Sunday, pray for those we serve, and plan a special collection.
- **VOLUNTEERS:** Plan an event or IOCC display. Organize a coffee hour, presentation, or luncheon to benefit IOCC.
- **YOUTH:** Organize a kit drive or your own IOCC fundraiser – a car wash, dance-a-thon, or spaghetti dinner.

More info available at iocc.org/dayofsharing

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