



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES NEWS & NEEDS

HELPING OTHERS HELP THEMSELVES

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IOCC EXTENDS A HEALING HAND TO AFRICA

Katente, Uganda — In this small village, about 50 miles from the capital city of Kampala, there is a school run by the Orthodox Church of Uganda where the children have to sleep four to a bed. They are AIDS orphans, the legacy of living in Africa's "death capital" where the transmission rate peaked at 18% in the 1990s, but has now been significantly reduced to about 5%.

While AIDS remains the number one health problem in Uganda and other African nations, the continent is suffering from multiple health issues: malaria that disproportionately claims the lives of children; the breakdown of sanitation and clean water systems which leads to disease; the lack of maternal and early childhood care; and hospitals that chronically lack medical supplies and medicines. "Much of Africa's healthcare crisis can be traced to the political and economic turmoil of central governments that have failed to deliver basic services," says Godlove Ntaw, who specializes in African development programs for IOCC.

Since 2004, IOCC has been serving the health needs of Africans and strengthening the national Orthodox churches to support their communities. A total of \$16.2 million has been invested in HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention programs, and for the delivery of medical supplies and pharmaceuticals to hospitals and clinics.

photo courtesy of MTI



IOCC is addressing the health needs of Africans with medical and health education programs valued at over \$16 million. Above, a woman and her child in Niger where IOCC delivered two shipments of pharmaceuticals.

In Zimbabwe, there was a complete breakdown in water and sanitation systems which led to a cholera epidemic that has killed more than 3,300. IOCC responded by sending a shipment of medicines that is currently treating nearly 6,000 patients. Since 2006, IOCC has delivered a total of ten medical shipments worth \$8.5 million. Thousands of adults and children benefitted from hospital supplies, wheelchairs and medicines.

IOCC's flagship Africa initiative is in Ethiopia where its HIV/AIDS program has educated nearly 7 million Ethiopians since 2004 with

prevention and awareness training. IOCC has built the capacity of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC) to educate people through Patriarchal rallies and Sunday School. In addition, more than 22,000 individuals living with AIDS and orphans have received food, clothing and start-up capital for small businesses.

"Because of AIDS, political turmoil and economic chaos, Africa is a place prone to be in permanent emergency relief

(continued on page 5)

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



IOCC Ethiopia

Constantine M. Triantafilou (right), recently met with Mulageta Gebru, the head of a local organization in Ethiopia which has worked in partnership with IOCC on agricultural development programs.

Growing up I was always fascinated with Africa. When I finally traveled there after college I was amazed by its beauty and grandeur. I loved the people and their culture – so much so that I returned to work for a year on construction projects for the Orthodox Church in Kenya. My work for IOCC brings me back to Africa often, but now the beauty seems a strange backdrop to the severe need. Whether its AIDS, cholera, malaria, or the chronic shortage of hospitals and supplies, most African countries are grappling with grave public health issues.

Our cover story shows how IOCC's health initiatives meet real African needs while building the capacity of the national Orthodox Churches to respond to their communities. You will read about Ethiopia, where IOCC has conducted its flagship HIV/AIDS program and educated 7 million Ethiopians on prevention

strategies; and Zimbabwe, where medical shipments worth more than \$8.5 million have provided medicines and surgical equipment to a crumbling society. And IOCC has also started new projects in Niger and Cameroon in the last year.

In this issue of *News & Needs*, you'll also read about how Gaza and Georgia are recovering from war. With thousands displaced, living in temporary shelters and struggling to recover from trauma, you will read about how IOCC's Jerusalem and Tbilisi offices responded to the crises and used their networks of cooperation – particularly with the Orthodox Church – to reach those most in need.

In Greece, a new \$1.3 million grant by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese will continue to help farmers recover from wildfires. IOCC will construct a soil lab in the Peloponnese that will allow farmers to determine what crops to cultivate and what supplies to use to get the best yield.

In 2008, IOCC led an effort to recruit and mobilize Orthodox volunteers for service opportunities in the U.S. Read about how over 200 volunteers provided \$3.5 million in assistance that was focused on long term housing, education and family support needs.

Finally, IOCC recently completed a strategic planning process involving our staff and Board Members. As part of that process, we updated IOCC's Mission Statement. We feel this new statement more clearly conveys the scope and purpose of IOCC's unique role in the humanitarian field.

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.

Thank you for allowing us to keep faith with thousands around the world.

Yours In Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC) was established in 1992 by the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) as the official humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians to work in cooperation with Orthodox Churches worldwide.

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.

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recycled paper

FAMILIES IN GAZA ENDURE, STRUGGLE TO REBUILD

Gaza City, Gaza — Ahlam is a mother of four and lives in the Gaza Strip near the border with Egypt. She thought she had experienced enough tragedy when her husband was killed and her home was demolished in 2002 during the second Palestinian uprising. But on January 4, 2009, she and her children were told they had five minutes to evacuate their home. The family got out, then within minutes their home was reduced to rubble.

The deadliest conflict in Gaza in four decades has killed 1,300, wounded 5,300, and displaced more than 26,000. IOCC's Jerusalem-based staff responded quickly, coordinating efforts with local organizations to deliver food to 23,000 children and adults residing in shelters and affected communities throughout Gaza. IOCC also assisted beleaguered hospitals and shelters by providing thousands of quilts and hygiene kits.

"The situation in Gaza remains very critical," says Dirk Lackovic'van Gorp, IOCC Representative for Jerusalem/West Bank. "Significant numbers of people need food and the population is very traumatized and in need of psychological counseling." Officials estimate that 14,000 homes have been partially or completely destroyed and that schools and hospitals, as well as water, sewage and electrical facilities, have all sustained significant damage.

Through a new \$750,000 grant from ARD, Inc. by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), IOCC will provide 6,000 families (about 42,000 people) with food, blankets and hygiene supplies. IOCC is working to assist the

East. Jerusalem YMCA



IOCC's Jerusalem-based staff responded quickly to the Gaza crisis, coordinating efforts with local organizations and delivering food to families in Gaza City. A new \$750,000 grant from the US government will allow IOCC to provide food, blankets and hygiene supplies to more than 6,000 families.

most vulnerable, including those who have experienced the death or injury of a family member or who have a primary bread winner that is unemployed as a result of the conflict.

IOCC is also planning a program through funding from Action by Churches Together (ACT) that will rebuild community centers and, at the same time, provide work for unemployed construction workers. His Beatitude Theophilus III, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, has authorized IOCC to work with His Grace Bishop Alexios of Gaza to assist vulnerable Orthodox families in Gaza City with emergency home repairs as part of the response.

IOCC's appeal for Gaza contin-

ues. His Eminence Metropolitan Philip of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese has encouraged the faithful of North America to continue to support IOCC's efforts in Gaza: "I strongly urge each of our parishes to collect money in a way they see fit and forward it directly to IOCC as soon as possible."

"In the past we were able to rebuild our home," says Ahlam, "but with the siege imposed on Gaza and the suspension of aid, I doubt that we can build our home for the second time." Ahlam and her family received food, milk and blankets from IOCC. She is grateful for the help, but like thousands in Gaza who wonder about what lies ahead, it is hard to be optimistic.



ORTHODOX VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE U.S.



IOCC Baltimore

In 2008, over 200 IOCC volunteers from 55 Orthodox parishes helped to complete 50 new homes on Louisiana's Gulf Coast. IOCC is leading an effort to recruit more Orthodox volunteers for a variety of service opportunities in the U.S.

New Orleans, LA — In 2008, IOCC and a corps of 235 volunteers provided \$3.5 million in community development and emergency relief programs throughout the U.S. IOCC efforts were focused on supporting initiatives to build homes on the Gulf Coast, provide new books and educational equipment to inner city schools and train volunteers to respond to their community's long term needs. While the US Program focused on long-term development efforts, IOCC also responded with emergency programs for last year's Iowa floods and Hurricane Ike in Texas.

"We are in the vanguard of a national effort to engage Orthodox volunteers in a variety of opportunities right here in the U.S.," says Pascal Papouras, IOCC's

US Program Coordinator. According to Papouras, in 2008, IOCC volunteers represented 55 Orthodox parishes from eight different jurisdictions.

IOCC's largest volunteer program, "Volunteer in the Gulf Coast," mobilized 204 volunteers to build new homes for communities that are still rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina. Participants put in over 8,000 volunteer hours, worth a total of \$160,000, towards the completion of 50 new homes in Louisiana. Now in its third year, the program is recruiting volunteers for the 2009 season. [see page 5]

In the hurricane-battered Gulf Coast, IOCC is working to expand the capacity of local organizations to serve their community's long term needs by providing books

and educational materials to schools serving low income students, and by supporting initiatives that help families who have suffered from domestic abuse. "We chose to support key local partners because funding for vital outreach activities has been overlooked in the general relief and recovery of the major agencies on the Gulf Coast," says Papouras.

Desire Street Academy, a New Orleans high school for African-American boys, received over \$1 million in new books and audio/visual equipment through IOCC. In Alabama, Penelope House, which provides shelter and advocacy for battered women and their children, received a \$19,000 grant for a pilot project to educate primary schools in Mobile County to reach out to families suffering from domestic abuse. Also in Alabama, IOCC partnered with the National Head Start Association to provide more than \$800,000 in new books and classroom instructional materials to children in eight counties. In New Orleans and surrounding parishes, IOCC partnered with the Peja Stojakovic Children's Foundation to distribute an additional \$800,000 worth of books to youth organizations. IOCC received valuable assistance for these projects from Brother's Brother Foundation.

The latest IOCC volunteer initiative is the "Frontline", a group of Orthodox clergy and lay people trained by IOCC in Critical Incident Stress Management, a form of trauma evaluation and counseling. The Frontline, now 40 members strong, represents five different Orthodox jurisdictions.

(continued on page 5)

IOCC EXTENDS A HEALING HAND TO AFRICA

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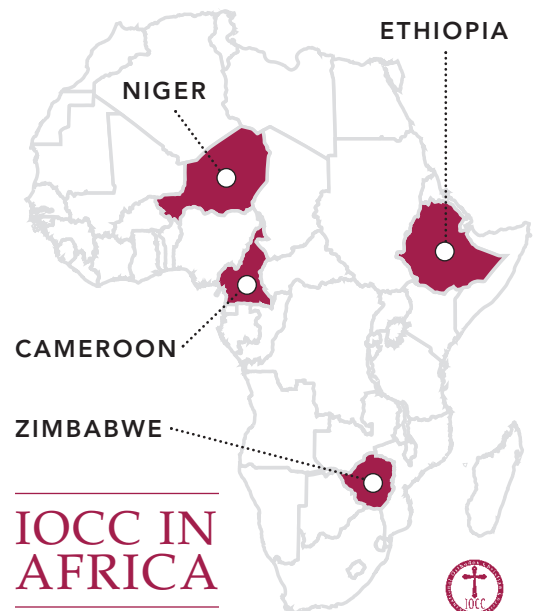
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mode," says IOCC Executive Director Constantine M. Triantafilou. "But we want to help Africa by building the capacity of local partners – particularly the Orthodox Church – so that the continent will not always be in a cycle of dependency on foreign aid."

In contrast to Ethiopia's 40-million strong Orthodox Church, Cameroon's Orthodox community is small, nevertheless, "In this predominantly Catholic country, the Orthodox are going to the remotest parts where no one is working with the poor," says Ntaw who was in Cameroon recently on behalf of IOCC to meet with representatives of the Patriarchate of Alexandria. In 2008, IOCC delivered its first medical shipment to Cameroon with antibiotics for the Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital in Youande.

IOCC's Africa Partners

Brother's Brother Foundation (BBF)
 Ethiopian Orthodox Church
 Development and Inter Church
 Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC)
 Globus Relief
 Greek Orthodox Ladies
 Philoptochos Society
 IMRES
 IDA/Netherlands
 Luisa Guidotti Hospital
 Medical Teams International (MTI)
 Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria
 UCP Wheels for Humanity



Above, a patient at the Luisa Guidotti Hospital in Mutoko, Zimbabwe receives treatment for cholera with medicines provided by IOCC. Since 2006, IOCC has delivered more than \$8.5 million in pharmaceutical and medical supplies to Zimbabwe.

ORTHODOX VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE U.S.

(continued from page 4)

In 2008, the Frontline provided pastoral care to victims of the Iowa floods and Hurricane Ike in the Gulf Coast. "We practiced a kind of 'commando ministry,'" says Frontline volunteer and seminarian David Hostetler who counseled those staying in shelters in Galveston, Texas. "We were able to move from case to case filling in where needs were not being met. The lack of a bureaucracy made us more responsive to immediate needs on the ground."



HELP BUILD HOMES ON THE GULF COAST

Natural disasters destroyed or damaged thousands of homes on the Gulf Coast. Join the growing network of IOCC volunteers to help families rebuild their lives by building new homes. You do not need to be a skilled carpenter – just energetic! We are recruiting volunteers for one week or longer of service in the Gulf Coast.

www.iocc.org/gulfcoast



TRAUMA OF WAR LINGERS FOR CHILDREN IN GEORGIA



IOCC Baltimore

IOCC has been providing continuous assistance to thousands of displaced families throughout Georgia since the conflict began in August 2008, and is investigating ways to provide psychological counseling for women and children who have been traumatized by the war.

Tschvarichamia, Georgia — For the families forced to flee the war between Russian and Georgian forces six months ago, the villages they left in the region of South Ossetia can seem like Shangri La compared to crowded displacement centers. “We liked everything there, the weather, the fertile land,” says Nani, a young farmer’s wife from South Ossetia. “I would have stayed,” she continues, “but of course I had to leave for my children.” Her little daughter Tamar startles when a cell phone goes off, a response that began, says her mother, when she first heard the bombs.

Some 25,000 Georgians will not be able to return to their homes in South Ossetia. While some have been moved by the Georgian government into new housing, others must continue to live in cramped and temporary shelters.

“Whether they are adjusting to life in new settlements or continuing to live in temporary shelters, these families face enormous diffi-

culties,” says Darejan Dzotsenidze, IOCC’s program manager in Georgia. “Post-traumatic disorders among women and children have increased tremendously with many suffering flashback episodes, insomnia and emotional instability,” she continued.

IOCC has been providing continuous assistance to thousands of displaced families throughout Georgia since the conflict began in August 2008. Through a \$200,000 grant by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), IOCC assisted over 4,000 individuals by providing stoves,

fuel for cooking, bedding and winter clothes. The Georgian Orthodox Church, IOCC’s long time partner in Georgia, helped identify needy families.

IOCC has also received funding from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN World Food Programme, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, to winterize collective centers where displaced families are housed, distribute needed food rations to villages affected by the conflict, and provide animal feed to small-scale farmers.

“We are investigating more ways to help these families,” says Dzotsenidze. “Psychologists and trained volunteers can provide activities for children such as art therapy, sports activities, and others, to help children recover from the traumas of displacement and to help prevent the development of unhealthy behaviors such as substance abuse and violence.”



SEEDS OF HOPE TAKE ROOT FOR GREEK FARMERS

Peloponnese, Greece — With six sacks of forage seed, farmer Dimitris Politicos has replanted nearly five acres of pastureland that had been burnt by wildfires that ravaged the Peloponnese in 2007. With the seed, along with several bags of animal feed to help sustain his 293 sheep, Politicos hopes to have sufficient pastureland to keep his flocks alive.

Now, IOCC is launching a new initiative to help Politicos and other Peloponnese farmers to further recover and improve their crop yield. Through a \$1.3 million grant from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, IOCC will construct the Peloponnese's first soil laboratory which will help farmers analyze the condition of their soil and water in order to determine what crops to cultivate and better manage fertilizer use.

This is the third grant that the Archdiocese has provided to help farmers recover their livelihood since the devastating wildfires of 2007 which destroyed cattle, grazing lands and significantly altered the composition of soil and polluted water sources. The Pancretan Association of America will also assist in the lab's funding with a \$75,000 grant to IOCC.

Previously, farmers willing and able to test their soil had to send samples to Athens and wait an average of three weeks for the results. The three week waiting period is impractical. "The availability of a soil lab in the Prefecture would return results within a matter of days and encourage more farmers to test their soil," said Alex Machaskee, IOCC Board Chairman. "Environmentalists and agronomists agree that this will help the Peloponnese to recover economi-

D. Djukic/IOCC Greece



With help from IOCC, farmer Dimitris Politicos has replanted nearly 5 acres of pastureland that had been burnt by wildfires that ravaged the Peloponnese in 2007. Now, a new soil lab built by IOCC will help Peloponnese farmers increase their crop yield.

cally and environmentally."

This latest grant from the Archdiocese will also provide a two month supply of feed for up to 80,000 animals, benefitting 1,000 farming families whose lands were completely destroyed by the fires. "We are grateful to the Almighty for the devoted faithful of our Archdiocese of America whose magnanimous generosity enabled us to respond in such a substantial way from the onset of this catastrophe," said His Eminence Archbishop DEMETRIOS

of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

The 2007 fires were Greece's worst in a century and killed 61 people and over 25,000 cattle and sheep. More than 500,000 acres of land were damaged and destroyed, amounting to about 5% of Greece's territory. IOCC has provided nearly \$4 million in relief and development programs to the Peloponnese since September 2007, including 3,100 tons of animal feed and 80 tons of forage seed to replant grasslands.





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Become an IOCC Parish Rep!

Parish Representatives play a vital role in generating support for IOCC in just a few hours per month.

Everything necessary for this job can be provided by IOCC. Send contact information for your parish representative, or questions to:

Vasi Jankovich
IOCC Outreach Coordinator
1-877-803-IOCC (4622)
vjankovich@iocc.org



The Will To Help

Many people think about making a will, yet a majority leave their estate without having made one at all. Every person – no matter what other estate planning tools exist – should have a will appropriate for their individual circumstances.

A legacy of hard work and generosity can live on through IOCC. For more information on including IOCC in your will or to make a gift of appreciated securities, call IOCC toll-free at 1-877-803-4622 or visit iocc.org/plannedgiving.



The IOCC Foundation is a professionally managed, not-for-profit support organization which exists to further the work of IOCC and its charitable mission. Gifts to the IOCC Foundation remain permanently restricted and inviolate with a percentage of the assets disbursed annually to support the mission of International Orthodox Christian Charities. For further information contact Dan Christopoulos, IOCC Director of Development, toll free at 1-877-803-4622 or dchristopoulos@iocc.org.

