



AFTER WAR'S DEVASTATION, IOCC HELPS REFUGEES REBUILD THEIR LIVES

Amman, Jordan — Three years ago, Iman and her family left everything and fled Baghdad's violence for Amman, Jordan. "You have twelve hours to leave the country," they told us," recounts Iman, "so we left." But good jobs are in short supply in Jordan so Iman's husband, a skilled surgeon, relocated to Sudan, itself a volatile and war-torn country.

The United Nations estimates there are approximately 42 million refugees worldwide (both individuals displaced to a foreign country as well as those displaced inside their country). Millions of refugees languish in shelters for years, dependent on others for the basics.

Refugees and displaced persons face special problems: the relief of escaping wars or natural disasters gives way to the stress of having to start their lives over, usually with few belongings. Compounding the tragedy of losing everything is the challenge of living in a country that may not grant you its nationality or recognize your own. Those who have no nationality are estimated to be between 11-12 million people worldwide. Infants and youth suffer the most as their lack of nationality keeps them from a public education or government services.

From its inception, IOCC has



R. Erickson/IOCC Georgia

IOCC is working in close cooperation with the Georgian Orthodox Church to provide art and drama therapy for children who were traumatized by last summer's war in South Ossetia.

helped refugees. In 1992, IOCC's office in Belgrade, Serbia delivered emergency supplies to Bosnia where thousands were displaced by civil war. IOCC then assisted these families to rebuild their farms and restart livelihoods.

Today, IOCC helps tens of thousands of refugees and displaced families in Georgia, Syria, Jordan and Iraq by providing food, medicine, hygiene supplies, psychological counseling, education for children and vocational training for young people.

Syria has absorbed 1.2 million of the 4 million Iraqis who have been displaced since 2003. Since 2007, IOCC has invested nearly \$10 million to provide vocational training (car repair, culinary arts, sewing, cell phone repair, and hair styling) for Iraqi youth as well as educational support for children, and hygiene supplies for thousands of Iraqi and Syrian families. Vocational training affords Iraqis with their best chance at finding work.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



IOCC Baltimore

Constantine M. Triantafilou on a recent visit to Syria to review IOCC's program for Iraqi refugees. These Iraqi school children are some of the thousands who have received assistance from IOCC.

An IOCC staff person recently traveled to the nation of Georgia to report on the plight of displaced families and how IOCC was assisting them. About 25,000 individuals were displaced from their homes as a result of the 2008 war in South Ossetia. She tells of walking into a school that had been converted into a makeshift shelter for about 100 families from South Ossetia, mostly farmers. As soon as the residents learned that she was a visitor, they immediately crowded around her, convinced that she had news of their farms or could tell them how soon they could go home. One woman came up to her and said, "Please tell them to stop burning our farms because we are willing to go back."

The sad truth for these families and tens of thousands that IOCC works with every day is that they will probably never be able to go home. As time goes on, they begin to accept the reality of having to start a new life in a new place, usually with few resources. As you'll read in our cover story, that's where IOCC comes in. Since 1993, when we started assisting those who had been displaced by the Bosnian war, to today where we

work with Iraqi refugees and Georgian displaced persons, IOCC uses a comprehensive approach to helping these individuals build new lives; first, emergency supplies to help meet their daily pressing needs; counseling to help them recover from the effects of war trauma; education for children, which more than anything can give them a sense of normalcy; and vocational training for young people to help give them marketable skills.

You will also read about IOCC's new initiative that has provided millions of dollars in educational materials to the National Head Start Association. This is vitally needed now when public schools in low income areas are feeling the effects of the economic downturn.

IOCC Intern Ryan Erickson writes movingly about his time in Georgia and the resilience of Georgians to use their own tradition of hospitality to recover from the lasting effects of war. In Uganda, IOCC is working alongside the Uganda Orthodox Church to enable children who have been orphaned by a long-running civil war and AIDS to receive an education. And in Romania, IOCC's new program will work alongside the Romanian Orthodox Church to create more effective programs to reach the poor.

During these difficult times, your support means more to us than ever before, and we are working diligently to maximize the benefit of every dollar you contribute. IOCC's programs are only possible through your commitment to work alongside us to reach those in need.

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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SMALL BLESSINGS PROVIDE BIG IMPACT FOR GEORGIANS RECOVERING FROM WAR

Dirbi, Georgia — It's a pleasant evening in Dirbi. A brief thunder storm has washed away the muggy heat. As the sun sets, Manana, 49, sits in her yard, watching the water buffalo make their way from the pastures into this rural farming village in the Shida Kartli region of Georgia.

Behind its idyllic façade, Dirbi is still struggling to recover from the events of summer 2008. On the evening of August 7, Manana, her husband and two sons, and the nearly 3,000 other residents of Dirbi watched with horror as war broke out in nearby South Ossetia. Three days later, the bombs began to fall on Dirbi. Those that hadn't evacuated – the elderly, men and women without young children – took refuge where they could. One resident still lost his life.

More than a year since the war ended, the residents of Dirbi – now located on the “frontier” of Georgian-controlled territory – still fear for their safety. Every cross-border incident renews fears that war will come again. But the greater worry is how to provide for one's family. Quality pasture is in short supply. Water that once irrigated their crops has now been



R. Erickson/IOCC Georgia

Manana and her mother received IOCC intern Ryan Erickson with a cake made from flour and sugar from IOCC supplies. Even in the aftermath of war, Georgians retain their legendary hospitality.

diverted by the South Ossetians. Cross-border trade is not even dreamed of. Other than the school teachers and medical professionals,

no one has a salaried job.

“We're hanging on to thin air,” says Manana who is receiving food kits from IOCC through its partnership with the World Food Programme. Dirbi is one of 28 conflict-affected villages where IOCC is distributing food to about 35,000 individuals.

Though dependent on food aid, Dirbi's war survivors still have a certain dignity. During my first visit to Georgia two years ago, I became familiar with the famous Georgian hospitality – food, wine and lots of it. But when I returned to Georgia this summer, I did not think the same generosity would be possible in the war's aftermath.

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Ryan Erickson was IOCC's 2009 intern for Georgia. Ryan had the opportunity to see firsthand the operations of a humanitarian aid organization as it implemented both emergency relief and long term development programs. IOCC interns perform a number of tasks including monitoring and evaluating projects, interviewing beneficiaries, conducting needs assessments, and assisting in proposal development. IOCC anticipates offering internships

in 2010 in the Middle East, Africa and the Caucuses, however internship locations are subject to change. IOCC internships require a 10 to 12 week full-time commitment. For more information, please submit inquiries to relief@iocc.org, with “IOCC Internship Program” in the subject line.

IOCC AND ORTHODOX CHURCH REACH UGANDA'S YOUTH



Z. O'Dell/IOCC Ethiopia

Apostolos (third from left) lost his parents to AIDS and found himself at the tender age of 14 responsible for 6 brothers and sisters. Today, he hopes to go to university and study law with help from the Uganda Orthodox Church and IOCC.

Katente, Uganda — Far off the main road linking the capital city of Kampala with the Lake Victoria commercial port of Jinja, children lie in wait near the trenched ditches along dirt roads, waiting for white ants to climb out of their hills before the heat of the sun drives the insects underground again. With weathered plastic cups in hand they hope to catch as many of these delicacies as possible.

For many children in this area, these white ants may represent their biggest source of nutrients. The HIV/AIDS epidemic and civil war over the past two decades have left a wake of extreme poverty and large families parentless and displaced from their homes.

Along that same road is a clearing and the site of St. Mary Parish of the Uganda Orthodox Church (UOC). Here, the Orthodox Church provides a haven for orphans and vulnerable children to get food, education, and perhaps a little dignity. Through its primary and secondary schools at

the St. Mary Parish, the UOC is providing hundreds of children throughout Uganda with schooling, books, and uniforms.

"I have seen much suffering and violence in my lifetime, and I do not want the same for my brothers and sisters," says Apostolos, 20, who is the eldest of six orphaned siblings. "After our parents died it was just me left to provide for our family, and I was scared because I was still so young."

IOCC is helping to support the St. Mary Parish primary and secondary schools through a new agricultural project. IOCC is constructing a poultry farm and corn mill at the school which will provide students with a marketable skill. Local villagers will also benefit from the ability to mill their corn crop locally instead of incurring the expense of milling in Kampala. And the school will be able to defer some of the costs of sponsoring children through the income brought in by the mill and the poultry.

Additionally, IOCC is providing regulation desks for classrooms, which will allow the schools to be nationally certified for proctoring end of year exams. "Before we had these desks, the school was paying for the costs of students who had to travel long distances to take the year-end exam," remarks headmaster James Kakende. "Now, that money can be spent on sponsoring new children, and local families will have more money left for their survival needs."

After spending more than 6 years living and studying in Katente, and being financially supported by the school, Apostolos is poised to graduate high school next year. "With the help of the school I have been educated, and given income to support my brothers and sisters, and I am no longer scared for the future." Apostolos hopes to be able to attend University and study law.

by Zachary O'Dell
IOCC Ethiopia



IOCC PARTNERING TO GIVE CHILDREN IN U.S. A HEAD START

Baltimore, MD — A classroom full of three and four year olds dig into their bowls of Cheerios. On closer inspection, you see that their placemats are also diagrams marking where to place bowl, spoon and napkin. This is a “Family-Style Meal” at a Head Start program in suburban Baltimore, meant to teach these pre-schoolers etiquette at meals.

After breakfast, their teacher, Cindy Kleiman, gives them a lesson on fire safety, explaining the purpose of a fire hydrant. She passes around a poster and the children giggle at a picture of a Dalmatian wearing a fireman’s hat.

Head Start is the federal program that provides millions of low-income children across the U.S. with comprehensive nutrition, health, education, and parental involvement services. “We see a desperate need for this program,” says Kleiman who reports a growing trend in grandparents raising grandchildren. “Often I go on home visits and

notice lots of people living in small and sparsely furnished apartments.”

Head Start also provides a range of services for parents. Tess Walker, a full time social worker with Head Start at the same Baltimore location, has a client load of 34 families. Walker helps parents with everything from writing a resume to finding child-friendly events at local museums. “We really provide an outlet for parents to listen to their concerns, but we also make it clear to them that this is not daycare, this is preparedness for the first grade and kindergarten,” says Walker.

Since 2008, IOCC has been providing the National Head



Start Association, with over \$3 million dollars worth of books and school supplies. IOCC’s assistance has reached Head Start programs across the country. IOCC is further exploring the possibility of linking Orthodox volunteers with Head Start centers throughout the country as part of IOCC’s US Program.

Ayesha Clatterback, a Head Start coordinator in the Baltimore area who received IOCC’s shipment and sent portions of it to Head Start centers around the country says that early intervention is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty. She has seen generations of Head Start children stay in touch with staff members like herself for further assistance as they apply for college and full time jobs. “It’s really making a difference,” she says.



A pre-kindergarten class at a Head Start facility in suburban Baltimore share a meal. IOCC is working in partnership with the National Head Start Association to provide millions of dollars worth of books and other supplies to low-income children across the U.S.

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IOCC Jordan

Nearly one million Iraqi refugees are living in Jordan, including many children. IOCC is providing vocational training and therapy primarily for women who are heads of households.

In Jordan, IOCC assisted 1,600 Iraqi refugees with art and drama therapy programs designed to help reduce the lasting psycholog-

ical effects that displacement has on Iraqi refugee children. This program, funded by Action by Churches Together (ACT), also

provided training in computer literacy, sewing, handicrafts and hair styling for Iraqi women. Iman and her sons enrolled in IOCC computer literacy classes giving them marketable skills and a diversion from worrying about their future as refugees.

In Georgia, 38,000 individuals were internally displaced after the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia. The government built permanent housing for thousands of displaced persons. However, many will likely never see their villages again and must find work. In a program also funded by ACT, IOCC and the Georgian Orthodox Church are providing social workers and counselors to direct support groups, therapy sessions, and art classes to help children work through their war trauma. "Some people – especially the men – do not feel comfortable coming to the self-help groups, so I come to them," says Rusudan Ksovreli, a social worker who is part of the IOCC team. "I help them with any need they might have, from helping them fill out paperwork to putting them in touch with a priest."



SMALL BLESSINGS PROVIDE BIG IMPACT FOR GEORGIANS RECOVERING FROM WAR

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I was greatly surprised when Manana brought out a simple cake made with the very flour and sugar IOCC had provided. I tried to refuse because I knew how small their flour ration was, but it was no use. For Manana, the simple act of feeding a guest helped to

bring some normalcy back to life.

My three-month internship with IOCC marked my third visit to Georgia. With each visit, I gain a deeper appreciation for this warm, generous people and fascinating culture. This summer I was able for the first time to give

back in some small way to this country that has given me so much, and I thank IOCC sincerely for having provided me with this opportunity.

by Ryan Erickson
Intern, IOCC Georgia



NEW GRANT BROADENS ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH'S SOCIAL SERVICE



IOCC Romania

IOCC's new program initiative for Romania will help the Orthodox Church plan and implement new programs to help the poor and address social issues. IOCC's most recent program in Romania trained thousands of Romanian Orthodox clergy and teachers to help address family violence and the stigma of HIV/AIDS.

Baltimore, MD — IOCC has launched a new program to support the efforts of the Romanian Orthodox Church to more effectively help Romanian communities achieve economic sustainability and overcome severe social issues. The new program is made possible through a \$1.6 million grant from the Romanian Ministry of Labor, Family and Equal Opportunity and the European Union.

Romania, one of the newest members of the European Union, has tremendous human and natural resources, though it lags far behind the rest of Europe in jobs and income level. Access to healthcare is inadequate in many rural areas.

The two-year program will help the Church become a key player in providing social services and in creating new jobs and improving education and health care.

"Our continuing collaboration

with the Patriarchate of Romania has risen to a new level with the inauguration of this grant to further strengthen the capacity of the Church to offer social services benefitting all Romanians," said Constantine M. Triantafilou, IOCC Executive Director and CEO. "The power of this partnership lies in developing systems and capacities based entirely upon local realities, needs, and resources," he continued.

IOCC is well experienced in working alongside the Romanian Orthodox Church to be an agent for social change. It was U.S. Ambassador to Romania Jim Rosapepe who first recognized the potential of IOCC to work in partnership with the Orthodox Church in the late 1990s. Since 2005, over 2 million Romanians have been educated in the prevention of HIV/AIDS and family violence through a program that IOCC implemented in cooperation with the Romanian Orthodox Church (and funded by the United States Agency for International Development). IOCC trained project coordinators who in turn trained over 1,200 priests and almost 1,000 religion teachers to reach youth and families with prevention strategies.





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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.

IOCC VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT: ANNE POURAKIS ALEXANDROU



Anne Pourakis Alexandrou of Cold Spring Harbor, New York went the extra mile recently for IOCC and the people it serves. "Through hard work, commitment, and dedication that I have experienced in the last 5 months of training for the NYC marathon, IOCC exhibits the same dedication and commitment every single day of every single year," says Anne. After the NYC Marathon, Anne plans to continue to work as the GOYA advisor in her parish. "They are the next generation and by increasing their awareness they are empowered to make the difference" in our future. For more information on how you can compete in an athletic event and raise support for IOCC, contact Megan Carniewski at mcarniewski@iocc.org.



Donated Cars Still A Vehicle For Change

Are you thinking of selling or trading in that old car, boat or RV? Why not donate it instead?

As a charitable contribution to IOCC, your vehicle donation could make a big difference in the lives of people in need. In addition, you may receive a tax-deduction.

Visit iocc.org/cars for details