



Creating Opportunity in Greece

Fueling Economic Recovery

The long economic crisis in Greece still affects daily life there in ways that are lasting and real. In 2013, IOCC joined with foundations and partners in the US to create *Give for Greece*. Working closely with Apostoli, the humanitarian arm of the Archdiocese of Athens under the Orthodox Church of Greece, the program currently provides support for microenterprises and associations; education for refugees and Greek youth; food assistance for the most vulnerable; and medical supplies for public hospitals.

Supporting self-sufficiency through entrepreneurship.

Running a small business can be difficult at best, let alone during a crippling recession and pandemic. Yet IOCC's efforts have helped many ventures flourish, such as Pandora's Box Souvenirs in Assiros, near Thessaloniki. These artists print creative designs on marble to make coasters, wall hangings, and other decorative items. IOCC provided specialized equipment to help ramp up production. And today, Pandora's sells products at some of Greece's most famous tourist destinations.



Give for Greece equips small businesses and microenterprises like Pandora's Box Souvenirs (above and below left) for success and sustainable growth. Photos: IOCC/Konstantinos Tsakalidis.

Cracking the code of opportunity.

Both Greek and refugee students learn highly marketable skills through Code+Create, implemented in partnership with the Greek Open Technology Alliance (GFOSS).^{*} These free courses teach the basics of computer coding, web design, robotics, and more—opening new career paths. Amid COVID-19, courses were moved online—one adjustment among many to keep programs running safely.

Helping talented students succeed.

Passing Greece's university entrance exams requires specialized (and expensive) instruction. With support from IOCC, the Social Frontistirio of the Archdiocese of Athens provides tutoring for students whose families couldn't afford it otherwise. These high-quality courses help talented

^{*}The Code+Create concept was developed by Finn Church Aid in 2017.

FROM THE
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

The new year brings with it a chance for a fresh start. As we begin 2021, let us do so with a renewed sense of hope and commitment to our faith in God.

We need to continue to come together to help our brothers and sisters and to share Christ's love. We are profoundly thankful for your faithful support—especially during this time of heightened need.

See how you are helping to make a difference in our feature on the *Give for Greece* program. You'll also read about efforts in progress to rebuild after last summer's explosion in Beirut and learn more about *Care Compass*—a US program providing tools to help build resilient communities.

So as we forge ahead, let us give thanks to God, reflect in prayer, take a deep breath, and then go forth into the world and continue to follow God's path—knowing that we can create a better tomorrow together.

Yours in Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

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high-schoolers access the education they need to succeed in life.

Offering vital food assistance.

This deep, prolonged recession has left many people literally wondering where their next meal will come from. In addition to distributing monthly dry-food parcels to underserved families and supporting a soup kitchen in Athens, IOCC offers prepaid grocery cards so families can buy food at a supermarket chain in Attica. One mother with a large family described how vital the cards are to her: "We have eight boys, so whatever we buy is consumed within minutes. But thank God, we are OK, and they are not hungry."

Providing lifesaving supplies.

Greece's public hospitals serve thousands across the country—but they've been hit hard by the financial crisis. IOCC sends shipping containers filled with such basic supplies as gauze bandages, gloves, syringes, and other necessities to help the medical system continue serving.

Give for Greece continues to reach those in need—adjusting to the new reality shaped by COVID-19—as your generosity helps them improve their lives and strengthen their communities.

While Give for Greece helps small businesses scale up production (Pandora's Box Souvenirs pictured), it also serves those in need with food assistance, education, and more. Photo: IOCC/Konstantinos Tsakalidis.



Hope after Disaster in Lebanon

Making Progress Together

Since a massive explosion shattered Beirut last August, IOCC teams have been working alongside the community, offering relief, assessing damage, and helping to rebuild. Thanks to an outpouring of support from donors at home and abroad—including a generous grant from the National Philoptochos—IOCC responded quickly, with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph, Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America. Among the places particularly impacted is St. George University Hospital, which IOCC has helped work toward resuming service.

Another of the projects underway is the restoration of St. Vincent de Paul School, run by La Filles de la Charité. The school provides a low-cost education and free lunches for around 500 children whose families are facing unemployment or financial hardship—including some orphans in the care of relatives.

The school suffered severe damage during the explosion. Luckily, no one was hurt, but the building was left with crumbling walls and broken windows, doors, desks, and chairs. Water and sanitary facilities were also damaged—an even greater concern given the pandemic.

With support from partner Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), IOCC is working to repair the school. The need is urgent, as Sister Joseph, the principal,



School principal Sister Joseph and IOCC staff survey extensive damage caused by the Beirut explosion. IOCC is repairing several schools and hundreds of homes with donor support.

explains: “One of the mothers wants to send her children back to school just to eat ... all her money is depleted, and she can no longer feed her children at home.”

Beside St. Vincent de Paul, IOCC is helping to rebuild 335 homes, more than 40 small businesses, five primary health centers, two dispensaries, and three other schools. Relief efforts also include community kitchens that provide meals for more than 380 families three days per week.

Full recovery will likely take years, but there is progress. In addition to NCA, IOCC is also working with Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe Germany and UNICEF to address longer term needs. Together, we’re working alongside the people of Beirut as they continue to rebuild.

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.

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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ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL
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Finding Resilience in Times of Crisis

Tools for Emotional and Spiritual Care

The damage from a disaster or crisis extends far beyond shattered homes and businesses. There are emotional injuries, too: the wounds of losing a home, a livelihood, or maybe even loved ones.

That's why IOCC developed *Care Compass*, a suite of tools designed to map ways individuals and communities can create a path toward resilience, digitizing elements of IOCC's emotional and spiritual care work.

Featuring modules on self-care, grieving with hope, family dynamics, and building resilient communities, *Care Compass* offers downloadable

resources, including short videos by IOCC Frontliners. Frontliners—a group of disaster counselors, clergy, and other trained professionals—share their hard-won experience to help communities recover spiritually as well as physically.

As we enter the new year—especially with the pandemic still a part of daily life—it's important that we help each other weather any kind of disaster. IOCC's *Care Compass* represents new and creative ways to help us care for each other.

To find out more, visit iocc.org/carecompass.

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