



NEWS & NEEDS

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

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Building Resilience in Ethiopia

Overcoming Severe Drought and Locust Infestation

Woynshet is a 35-year-old mother of three. She and her family live in Ethiopia's Amhara region, which has experienced four failed rainy seasons – contributing to an extended and severe drought. Adding to the difficult conditions, an infestation of desert locusts in 2020 – the worst in Ethiopia in 25 years, according to the UNFAO – devastated farmers' crops, causing extreme damage with a long-lasting impact on food supply.

The locusts destroyed Woynshet's crops, leaving her family without food or a source of income. Hoping to provide for her family, she tried working as a day laborer, "but the money was too little to feed my family," she said.

Then one day, the local agriculture expert brought good news. "He told me that I was selected to benefit from IOCC's cash support. I was very happy, and when I received the money, I immediately bought some food for my family."

Now able to feed her children, Woynshet invested the rest of her money back into her farm. She bought improved seed and fertilizer for her mung bean crop. She hired laborers to plow her land. And her mung beans – intermixed with sorghum – are growing well and are expected to provide a good yield.

Woynshet is very grateful to IOCC. "If it weren't for IOCC's support," she said, "I could not have

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Since receiving support through IOCC's desert locust resilience project, Woynshet has been able to successfully produce her mung bean crop and buy food for her family.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

The new year has arrived, and IOCC looks forward to the opportunities it brings to continue our work together in 2023.

In the new year, we often make a resolution to do something new, and it is much the same with the work of IOCC. We have the opportunity to help many people begin something new, making a fresh start after difficult circumstances. This edition of *News & Needs* will update you on our relief efforts in Ukraine – as well as those in Poland and Romania for refugees.

In Ethiopia, IOCC programs are providing assistance to families severely affected after years of drought and crop failure. And in Syria, your support is helping to fund a series of life-skills courses for women and youth to prepare them to enter the labor market.

These are just some examples of how your gifts are helping to lift up families and communities in need around the world.

IOCC and those we serve are grateful for your support. As you read these stories of impact, please remember that it is you that make our work possible. As the new year begins, we reaffirm our commitment to using your gifts well and to continuing to share Christ's love with those in need.

With thanks in Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO



Woyshet invested the money she received into her farm. Her mung bean crop is expected to provide a good yield.

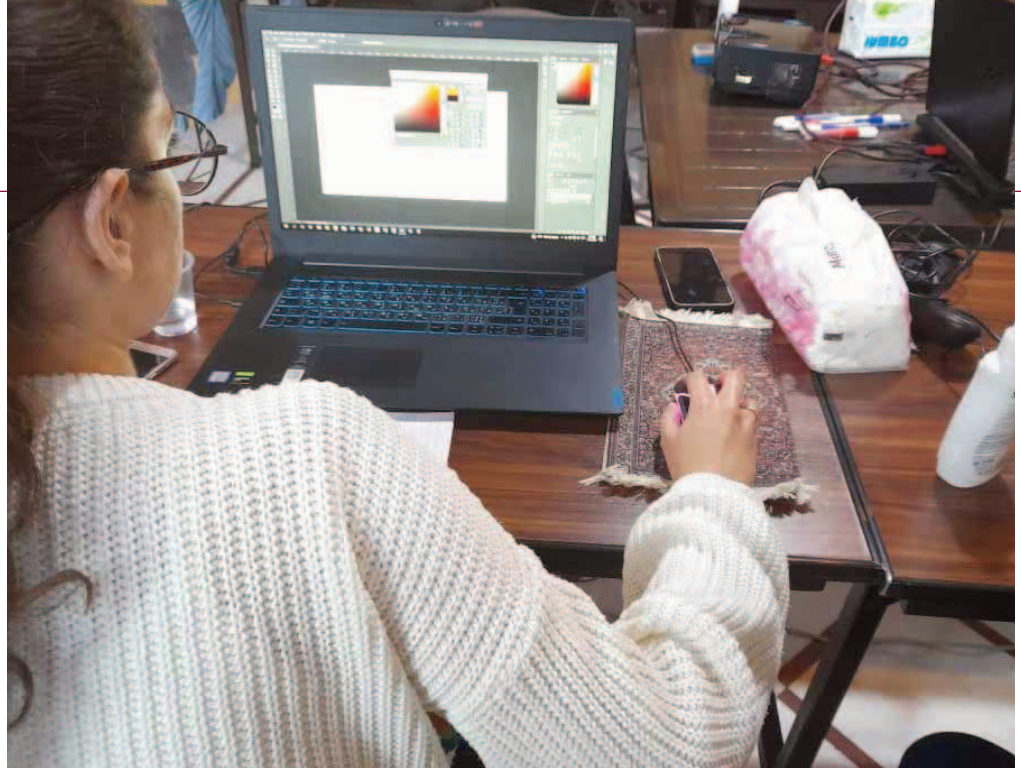
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produced this crop. Now I am very happy and satisfied when I visit my crop. My kids will not be hungry and will be able to attend their lessons properly.”

Woyshet's family was one of more than 600 households who received support through IOCC's desert locust response and resilience project, enabling these families to buy what they need when they need it. In addition, IOCC delivered crop and vegetable seeds to nearly 500 households. Six communities that had suffered from the locust infestations received fruit tree seedlings, small banana trees, and seeds for forage trees and grass.

IOCC has been active in Ethiopia since 2003, providing support in the Tigray and Amhara regions, and helping to treat and educate Ethiopians facing podoconiosis. As needs continue, so the work grows to help families and communities build resilience for the future.

Training programs in Damascus are giving women and young adults the skills and confidence they need to enter the labor market and pursue their dreams.



Surviving Conflict, Open to Opportunity

How IOCC and Partners Are Helping Women and Young Adults in Syria

Still affected by conflict, Syria also faces a multilayered economic crisis that has left millions unemployed and forced a new segment of society into poverty. Women-headed households and young adults have been particularly hard hit.

However, the conflict has transformed women's role in the workforce, opening opportunities previously reserved for men. There is a need for job training to help equip women and young adults to take advantage of those opportunities and enter the labor market.

IOCC is now providing training in Damascus, with support from the IOCC Foundation, and in partnership with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East's Department of Ecumenical Relations and Development. IOCC has launched a series of life-skills courses, helping

325 women and young adults gain skills that will help them support their families. These courses include English language, computer training, finance, and other subjects.

One 18-year-old student, Lina,* completed high school and applied for a scholarship from the Tourism Institute. She was rejected because she didn't speak English well. But, after taking the life-skills course in English, she gained fluency and confidence. When she applied again, the interviewers were impressed with her progress and awarded her a scholarship.

Lina is deeply grateful for the life-changing opportunity to pursue her dream career. She said, "I hope these types of initiatives and programs will continue to support the youth, particularly amid the current dire socioeconomic situation."

**Pseudonym used*

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.

iocc.org



Ukraine Relief Update

IOCC Programs Provide Vital Assistance in Ukraine, Romania, and Poland

As winter in Ukraine deepens, a new set of needs arises. Damage to infrastructure during the ongoing conflict has left thousands of civilians without water, power, and heat.

To address these growing needs, IOCC is drawing on experience in other areas torn by conflict. New efforts are focused on providing vital alternative power options—including generators and solar-energy systems. IOCC is also working to create programs to support income generation and employment. In addition, IOCC and a local partner are providing psychosocial support to help the people of Ukraine cope with what they're experiencing.

IOCC staff is on the ground in Ukraine. The response program spans the country and beyond its borders. In Ukraine, IOCC is distributing emergency supplies to partners, including emergency food and hygiene items—along with much-needed household appliances for accomodation centers.



IOCC programs are expanding to meet the needs of the people of Ukraine as they face harsh winter weather.

We are also helping to expand existing shelters and open new ones.

To support those seeking safety in Poland, IOCC is offering language lessons. And in Romania, antitrafficking training programs are in place to help protect refugees. IOCC is also offering cash assistance directly to refugees and has provided household supplies to generous Polish and Romanian families who have taken refugees into their homes.

As the conflict in Ukraine continues, please visit iocc.org/ukraineresponse to get updates on IOCC's work in the region.



Lenten Recipes Needed

If you have delicious fast-friendly Lenten recipes, please share them! We may publish your recipe and name as part of IOCC's 2023 Lenten recipe series.

Email your recipes to:
outreach@iocc.org



Volunteers Needed

JOIN OUR US RESPONSE THIS YEAR.

iocc.org/homebuild