

## Syria

*IOCC has worked in Syria through a local partner since 2002. With the onset of the Syria conflict, IOCC continued to manage programs to address the urgent and emergency needs of Syrians and Iraqi refugees by providing relief supplies, clean water and access to sanitation, medical equipment and supplies, and shelter. IOCC has also helped Syrians rebuild their livelihoods by providing jobs and income and has addressed the needs of families and children for education, family-friendly spaces, and psychosocial support. IOCC's work in Syria is closely connected with the local Orthodox Church, allowing increased access to people in need. IOCC has collaborated with the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate's St. Ephrem Patriarchal Development Committee on livelihoods programming for women, and with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate's humanitarian agency (the Department of Ecumenical Relations and Development) implementing multimillion-dollar programs addressing needs of vulnerable Syrians and Iraqi refugees.*

### Emergency Preparedness and Response



IOCC has trained more than 4,300 volunteers to provide rapid emergency response to vulnerable communities, including training in risk-management and disaster preparedness, mitigation, and management.

Since 2012, IOCC's emergency response program has reached over 4,400,000 vulnerable people, including internally displaced persons (IDPs). Activities have included services for maternal and children's health, childhood nutrition, protection services, and psychosocial support. IOCC has provided food, non-food emergency items, and shelter assistance in the form of rent support to over 1.1 million of the most vulnerable Syrians and Iraqi refugees in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Daraa, Homs, Lattakia, Tartous, Swaida, and Al-Hasakeh governorates.

IOCC also provides psychosocial support to Syrians in need and Iraqi refugees in these communities through counseling sessions, awareness building sessions, and referrals. Additionally, protection services, counseling, case management, and referrals are provided for vulnerable community members in target communities, including women and children.

Cases are referred for medical, legal, and psychosocial support at nearby service providers whom IOCC has identified and which have agreed to receive cases from IOCC's client base.

IOCC has conducted psychosocial support, child protection and GBV awareness programs, and has provided protection services, including counseling, case management, and referrals to service providers. IOCC has also provided awareness sessions for parents and caregivers on supporting children affected by trauma and where to receive specialized support. Services are provided at centers called family safe spaces, as well as by a mobile team based in each center that supports surrounding communities.

Emergency education support has been provided to over 31,500 children, as well as remedial classes for children whose educational progress has been impacted by the conflict.

## Food Security and Agriculture



Prior to the start of the conflict in Syria in 2011, agriculture accounted for the livelihoods of over half of the Syrian population. Today, crop production has been negatively impacted by several causes. Among them are labor shortages and high labor costs, crop and land destruction resulting from the conflict and extensive flooding (as seen in 2018), and fragmented markets with supply chains disrupted by poor-quality production and poor irrigation on existing farmlands.

IOCC has worked in the Kassab region, an area that was seriously impacted by the conflict, to help farmers restart production on family farms. The project supported 480 farming families (over 2,500 individuals) to improve the productivity of the farmland and quality of the crops, through the provision of tools and technical assistance and training to protect crops from damaging diseases and pests. Irrigation systems were also repaired and improved to ensure an adequate supply of water, and farmers learned how to better manage and conserve water resources used for irrigation. Drip technology, the most efficient system used to grow crops and ensure they have proper water and nutrients, was introduced to farmers; this method increases crop yield and ensures that water and fertilizer are evenly distributed throughout the field to the roots of crops by dripping through pipes. In addition

to supporting the farmers with enhanced crop productivity, the project improved the professional technical skills of 100 women in food-processing through trainings covering entrepreneurial skills and marketing basics. To ensure sustainability, the local community was significantly involved in all phases of the project, including the local municipality and community members, and an advisory committee made up of community members was formed, through which farmers meet and seek agricultural advice. One of the advisory committee's main purposes is to ensure that farmers have access to technical assistance in order to prevent crop diseases, and work toward the sustainability of their farmlands.

To improve food security and mitigate malnutrition health risks, IOCC has provided food parcels to help over 256,000 vulnerable individuals supplement their daily food needs.



## Sustainable Livelihoods



In 2022–2023, IOCC helped over 200 vulnerable women and young adults in Damascus and Rural Damascus improve their quality of life by establishing a training venue and providing life-skills courses and vocational training to equip them to find employment.

Since the onset of the crisis, IOCC has provided over 1,700 highly vulnerable individuals and their families with opportunities to improve their lives, including vocational and small-business training for over 230 vulnerable women. Upon completion of the training, participants received business start-up kits to help kick-start their at-home businesses.

In Maaloula, IOCC improved a women's entrepreneurship space and trained women in food processing techniques. IOCC renovated a space and purchased equipment as well as needed inventory to start the center. Women trained to make molasses, labneh, jams, dried fruits and other value-added products from local agricultural crops. Women are able to support their families with their income, and the new skills will allow for sustained earnings and business expansion as the security situation allows.

IOCC reached over 1,200 vulnerable individuals through cash-for-work projects that provided job opportunities and enabled participants to provide for their families and afford basic necessities during the crisis.

## Health

IOCC has established 16 family safe spaces (FSSs) in Syria. Each center serves an average of 6,500 people in both rural and urban settings and provides communities and families with family safe spaces, psychosocial support, gender-based violence awareness building, and referral services. In addition to services provided directly at the Dream Centers, mobile teams go out into communities to conduct trainings, evaluations, and referrals. Children who need it are referred for psychosocial or behavioral support and can also receive individualized educational assistance to help with learning disabilities. Other family members can receive counseling and referrals regarding gender-based violence or other family-health areas of concern.

During the conflict, IOCC rehabilitated health facilities and emergency units in hospitals and provided critical medical equipment such as anesthesia machines, ventilators, ultrasound machines, infant ventilators, and polytend neonatal incubators, to hospitals that provide services free of charge. IOCC also distributed wheelchairs and walking aids to vulnerable individuals and medical consumables to hospitals. In addition, IOCC provided lifesaving surgeries to over 13,800 individuals affected by random shelling and violence.

## WASH



IOCC also helped over 13,300 vulnerable pregnant women access quality ante- and postnatal services and other medical care, and conducted community awareness sessions on infant and young-child feeding, reaching over 18,300 vulnerable pregnant and reproductive-age women, supporting healthy feeding behaviors for child nutrition during the emergency.

IOCC has provided medicine for chronic diseases and cancer treatment to over 6,500 IDPs and others who could not afford it as a result of the conflict. IOCC also provided assistive devices to over 175 people, including wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, and eyeglasses.

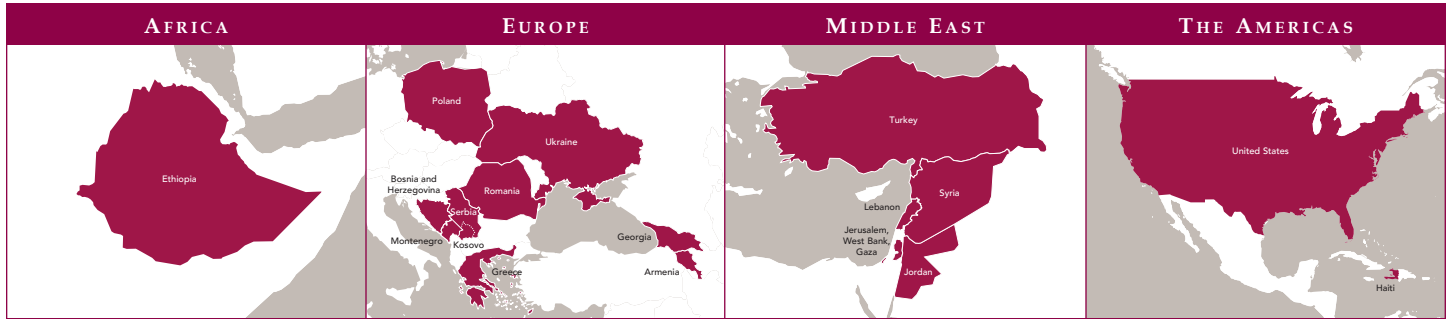


IOCC has provided WASH services to over 2,704,000 people since the onset of the crisis in 2011. Work has included over 70 water infrastructure projects, including drilling and repairing wells and providing water-storage tanks and water-distribution systems.

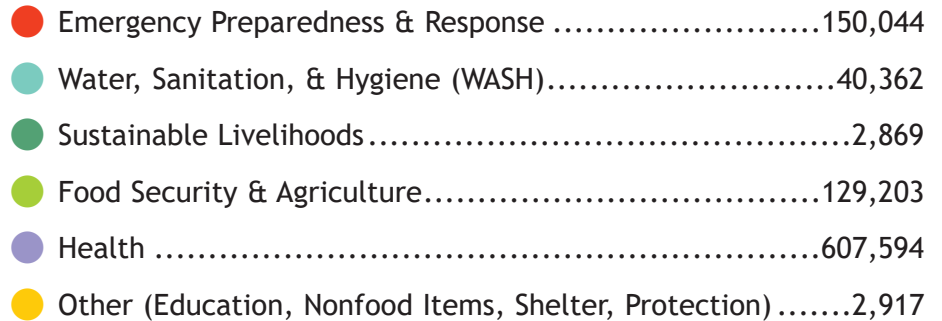
IOCC also provided nearly 500 hygiene awareness sessions, reaching over 16,300 people. IOCC has facilitated water trucking to ensure clean water for more than 49,600 people, including those living in camps in Northeast Syria, and delivered over 14,500 water tanks to vulnerable families—serving over 254,900 individuals.

**THROUGHOUT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**, IOCC continued its projects around the world while taking steps to protect staff, partners, and beneficiaries. All projects are continuously evaluated for multiple risk factors, and appropriate modifications made. IOCC ensures that all staff and beneficiaries receive information about COVID-19, including testing locations, and integrates this information into ongoing projects, as indicated by local health authorities.

# Active Worldwide Programs



- Ethiopia
- Armenia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Georgia
- Greece
- Montenegro
- Poland
- Romania
- Serbia including Kosovo
- Ukraine
- Jerusalem, West Bank, Gaza
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Syria
- Turkey
- Haiti
- United States



## IN 2023, IOCC SERVED 932,989 PEOPLE WORLDWIDE

*IOCC was established in 1992 and is the official humanitarian organization of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States. IOCC provides emergency relief and development assistance to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church and local NGO and community partners. Its global operations are managed from its headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland, in the United States, with field offices in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, East Africa, and the US. Since its founding, IOCC has distributed more than \$800 million worth of aid in over 60 countries around the world, and has extensive experience implementing programs in partnership with United States government agencies (USAID, BHA, PRM) and the United Nations (UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, OCHA), as well as with European and international donors.*



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