

## Health

While IOCC's work has spanned operations in more than 60 countries and myriad program areas, its work today is focused on five core competencies: emergency preparedness and response, WASH, sustainable livelihoods, food security and agriculture, and health. IOCC continues to serve communities where we work in other program areas, as needs and local priorities indicate, but our core work and depth of expertise and experience reside in these five key sectors. IOCC works with and through local partners, including the local Orthodox Church's development agency and other local NGOs. Capacity building for these partners is an integral part of IOCC projects. IOCC helps local communities address the needs they prioritize for themselves and aims to leave behind local structures better able to manage the developmental challenges communities face.



### COVID-19



In **Ethiopia**, IOCC procured and distributed personal protective equipment (PPE) and hygiene materials and supplies to partner staff and community members, and provided COVID-19 prevention messaging approved by the World Health Organization and Government of Ethiopia. More than 1,200 community members benefitted in the Baso Degago community, plus several thousand in the Were Babo District of the Amhara region.

In **Uganda**, IOCC assisted 21 urban and rural health facilities with critical PPE, hygiene supplies, and training for frontline health personnel. In all 65 parishes of the Uganda Orthodox Church, IOCC funding supported the procurement and distribution of PPE and hygiene supplies to establish compliance with the Government of Uganda protocols. Both projects also carried out mass dissemination of WHO- and Government of Uganda-approved COVID-19 health messaging. Approximately 70,000 women, men, and children are benefitting from the two projects.

## COVID-19 *(continued)*

In **Georgia**, with World Health Organization funding, IOCC has worked to raise awareness among essential workers and leaders of all the major faiths practiced in West Georgia (Poti and Khobi regions) about prevention measures to combat the spread of COVID-19. Working with local health authorities, the project provided training to long-haul truck drivers, farmers' market workers, staff at a Church-run nursing home, taxi drivers, and over 700 faith leaders on COVID-19 risks and prevention. This covered COVID-19 mitigation, the benefits of vaccination, and ways to address common questions and concerns in their communities. The project also provided PPE and cleaning and disinfecting supplies to the trainees, and produced and distributed COVID-19 prevention and awareness flyers.



## Ethiopia



In 2023, with funds from Orthodox Church Aid and Missions FILANTROPIA and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, IOCC started a four-year expansion of its podoconiosis prevention and treatment program in eight districts of the Amhara region.

Since 2010, IOCC has worked closely with the Ethiopian Ministry of Health and regional health bureaus on the prevention and treatment of podoco-

niosis (nonfilarial elephantiasis, a disfiguring, disabling neglected tropical disease), with the goal of eliminating the disease in Ethiopia. Community interventions include education on the importance of shoe-wearing, self-care methods, and hygiene; and through a private partnership, over 850,000 primary-school children received shoes. The projects prioritize training for health professionals and patients in podoconiosis prevention and treatment. Thus far, over 76,000 Ethiopians have received treatment and knowledge on disease management; over a million have received awareness education through community events and public campaigns; and more than 1,400 midlevel government healthcare workers have been trained on disease identification, management, and related issues. IOCC has also supported the treatment of lymphatic filariasis and provided integrated trachoma programming.

In collaboration with EOC-DICAC, IOCC implemented a \$15.4 million program funded by USAID/PEPFAR on HIV/AIDS prevention, awareness, care, and support in 153 districts throughout the country. IOCC also implemented a five-year, USAID-funded HIV/AIDS prevention program focused on stemming mother-to-child transmission, in collaboration with IntraHealth in 57 health center coverage areas. The program reached over 12 million Ethiopian men and women with general HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness messages.

## Syria

IOCC has worked closely with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, Department of Ecumenical Relations and Development, as well as with interfaith and international partners, providing assistance to Syrians and Iraqi refugees since 2002.

IOCC has established 16 “Dream Centers” or 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.

Since the conflict began, IOCC has rehabilitated health facilities and emergency units in hospitals and provided critical medical equipment such as anesthesia machines, ventilators, ultrasound machines, infant ventilators, and polytrend neonatal incubators, to hospitals that provide services free of charge. IOCC has 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.

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.





## Lebanon

Since 2012, IOCC has worked with partners including UNICEF to improve maternal, newborn, and child health services and awareness in the most underserved areas of Lebanon. IOCC supports the health-care system and facilitates access to health services for children and adults through subsidization of primary healthcare services, reaching over 44,450 individuals by the end of 2022.

By April 2022, IOCC had reached over 4,500 Syrian refugees through its mobile medical unit in North Lebanon. IOCC has also worked on the integration of mental health services within primary healthcare centers and has upgraded, refurbished, and contributed to operating costs of centers.

Maternal and child health programming promotes breastfeeding, healthy lifestyles with increased access to breastfeeding support, and malnutrition screening and treatment. Recently, IOCC revived the malnutrition program, providing refresher trainings to 26 primary healthcare centers and subsidizing malnutrition screening and care in 28. IOCC has also trained health staff of 12 governmental hospitals on the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative to support early initiation of breastfeeding.

During 2021 and 2022, IOCC created 44 mothers' support groups across Lebanon and conducted outreach and community mobilization around health and nutrition, immunization, infant and young-child feeding, and hygiene with more than 57,800 women in 2021 and over 61,400 in 2022.

With the outbreak of COVID-19, IOCC mobilized a COVID-19 Rapid Response Team and helped more than 1,600 Lebanese individuals and refugees register on the official platform for the COVID-19 vaccine. IOCC also deployed a vaccination team at the five Lebanese border entry points to check children's vaccination status. From the beginning of 2021, IOCC vaccinated nearly 15,000 children against measles and screened over 230,000 people entering Lebanon for COVID-19 symptoms.

During the 2022 cholera outbreak, IOCC mobilized a rapid response team in North Lebanon to identify possible cases and raise awareness on prevention and treatment to curb its spread. By the end of 2022, IOCC had reached over 38,000 caregivers of children with awareness on cholera prevention and had distributed oral rehydration solutions to 4,590 beneficiaries across Lebanon.

## Uganda

Girls and women worldwide too often face cultural and social barriers and stigma around their menstrual cycles. A project funded by the IOCC Foundation in 2019 helped girls in the Gulu district learn how to make reusable sanitary pads and take control of their menstrual health. Additional investments in latrines, clean water, and awareness building ensured girls were able to safely manage their periods by reducing stigma and increasing access to proper sanitation, privacy, and supplies—helping the girls improve their school attendance.



## Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza

In 2022–2023, IOCC trained kindergarten teachers to recognize and respond to signs of trauma in children and provided psychosocial support sessions for 1,440 children and their parents.

IOCC also provided referrals for individual psychosocial counseling and specialized service providers for children who needed additional care. IOCC is also reaching thousands of Gazan children with psychosocial support to help mitigate the impact of conflict on children. Through a wide network of community-based organizations, IOCC has worked with staff in kindergartens since 2018 to train educators, administrators, and parents to recognize signs of malnutrition in young

children and to make referrals for treatment. Since then, IOCC has conducted hundreds of screening sessions in kindergartens. About 33% of screened children have shown signs of malnourishment and been referred to clinics for treatment. IOCC also screened siblings of the children referred for treatment, and almost 63% of screened siblings were also referred.

In addition, IOCC staff rescreened kindergarteners from 2019 and 2020 and received a list of possible cases from administrators and teachers who had been trained to identify signs of malnutrition; about 40% of those identified were referred for treatment after evaluation by IOCC staff.



## Jordan

Following a community-based approach, IOCC provides health services for Jordanians and refugees with impairments and disabilities in **Jordan**. Providing disability services in the host community since 2015 and Azraq Camp since 2017, IOCC reached more than 37,600 people between 2015 and 2021. IOCC has equipped diagnostic clinics in seven locations to enable improved provision of health services for PWDs.

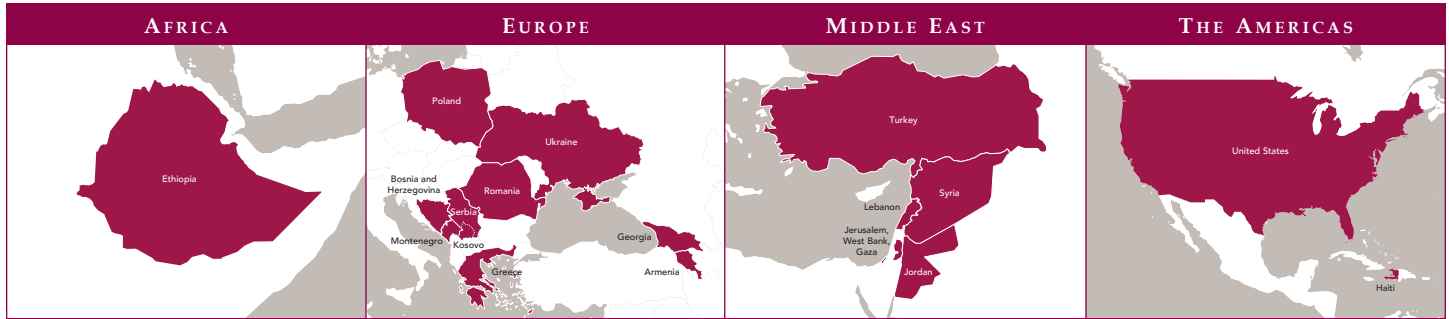
IOCC's disability specialists, as well as its local partner, have provided assistive devices such as hearing aids, glasses, low-vision devices, wheelchairs, and mobility aids to more than 10,300 refugees and Jordanians with disabilities. IOCC's diagnosis and treatment services are complemented by rehabilitation services, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and special education.

IOCC has provided these sessions to nearly 4,000 refugees and Jordanians, equipping them to better participate in society.

IOCC also supports caregivers of those with disabilities. Counselors provide one-on-one psychosocial support sessions to PWDs and caregivers in need. Disability specialists host workshops to equip caregivers with the skills to continue supporting PWDs once they complete their rehabilitation program. IOCC has worked with the Ministry of Health to train staff in community-based rehabilitation to better provide health services to PWDs and supports school staff, principals, and teachers on improving inclusion of children with disabilities in the classroom. All activities are implemented in close coordination with relevant ministries and Jordan's Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**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



<span style="color: red;">●</span>	Emergency Preparedness & Response .....	150,044
<span style="color: teal;">●</span>	Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene (WASH).....	40,362
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	Sustainable Livelihoods.....	2,869
<span style="color: lightgreen;">●</span>	Food Security & Agriculture.....	129,203
<span style="color: purple;">●</span>	Health .....	607,594
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	Other (Education, Nonfood Items, Shelter, Protection) .....	2,917

## 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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Toll Free Donation Hotline:  
877.803.IOCC (4622)



110 West Road, Suite 360  
Baltimore, MD 21204 USA  
Tel: 410.243.9820