

IOCC Capacity Statement

In its over 30 years of operation, IOCC has developed considerable experience and expertise across a range of sectors, including food security, microcredit lending, health, nutrition, agriculture, shelter, infrastructure, education, income generation, capacity building, and civil society development through programs that allow communities to lift themselves out of poverty and achieve economic sustainability. While IOCC continues initiatives across multiple sectors responding to the needs of communities facing varied development challenges, its work is now focused on key sectors: emergency preparedness and response; sustainable livelihoods; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); health; and food security and agriculture. 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 seeks to support local communities to address the needs they prioritize for themselves and to leave behind local structures better able to manage the developmental challenges communities face.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

IOCC has responded to many of the largest and most complicated humanitarian crises around the world since 1992, including conflicts in **Ukraine, Syria, Georgia,** and former **Yugoslavia**. IOCC also works in the **US** to mitigate the effects of disasters and has responded after natural and human-caused crises across the country. IOCC is committed to saving lives and serving acute human needs in challenging security, logistical, and political operating environments.

Current programming includes emergency response following earthquakes in **Syria** and **Turkey**. Initial work provided immediate relief, while early and medium-term recovery projects are providing transitional housing for displaced people as they repair their homes to make them safe and livable.

IOCC is currently responding to the effects of the conflict in **Ukraine** through programs in **Poland, Romania,** and **Ukraine**. Addressing both urgent and long-term needs, programs focus on three key areas: relief and repair support for people and institutions in Ukraine, assistance for families and institutions hosting Ukrainian refugees in other countries, and leveraging IOCC's experience providing psychosocial training for caregivers and support for those impacted, especially women and children.

IOCC has also responded to the Syrian conflict through programs in **Syria, Lebanon,** and **Jordan**, addressing the health, protection, nutrition, and WASH needs of those affected, including host-communities. Technical experts in each of these fields ensure compliance with SPHERE standards, donor requirements, and local government regulations.



Emergency Preparedness and Response *(continued)*



Since 2016, IOCC has opened 13 child-friendly spaces in **Syria** that provide psychosocial support to families, counseling services, conflict-resolution training, and life-skills training. IOCC has reached over 58,000 people through this project.

Since 2012, IOCC has also been providing healthcare, WASH services, emergency supplies, and livelihoods training in Syria. Some 7,500 vulnerable families are receiving nonfood items, hygiene, and shelter support.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

In **Lebanon**, IOCC has been improving WASH infrastructure in public institutions, vulnerable host communities, and refugee settlements in North Lebanon and Bekaa since 2008. The project improves water-supply infrastructure in host communities, enhances WASH infrastructure in informal settlements for refugees, and offers hygiene awareness activities for both Syrians and Lebanese.

As part of IOCC's work improving Church-run boarding schools in rural areas, IOCC constructed a new central sanitary block in 2021–2022. Work included a septic system and separate latrines for boys and girls. All work was done in collaboration with the Uganda Orthodox Church, applying engineering best practices and meeting or exceeding all Ugandan government standards. Additionally, to make clean water easier to access in rural areas, IOCC has dug wells and installed rainwater-harvesting systems on school buildings to collect water that boarding students use for laundry and bathing. This pilot project also trained partner and school staff on these techniques.

Since the outset of the Syria crisis in 2012, IOCC has also conducted regular hygiene promotion and awareness activities for Syrian refugee and Lebanese children and adults, in order to prevent WASH-related diseases in targeted areas, reaching almost

Both Syrians and Iraqi refugees are receiving psychosocial support, protection counseling, and referrals. And over 1,000 children are receiving specialized educational support.

In **North Lebanon**, IOCC is providing healthcare to refugees and vulnerable Lebanese, including vaccinations for over 160,000 children in 2018–2019, courses on infant and young child feeding (IYCF), and health consultations at two clinics for over 10,000 individuals. IOCC also operates two mobile clinics that serve approximately 4,000 refugees in informal settlements in the region.

In addition, since 2013 IOCC has been repairing critical infrastructure serving both refugees and vulnerable Lebanese, and has refurbished over 35 schools serving 21,000 children. The organization has also built and bolstered reservoirs and solar-powered pumping systems and has repaired water networks.

100,000 vulnerable individuals. In **Gaza**, water is crucial for both basic good health and successful farming, especially in an arid climate. From 2010 to 2015, IOCC created water catchments that collect rainwater, as well as tanks for drinking water, providing infrastructure that serves farmers and their neighbors. In 2021 alone, WASH initiatives in Lebanon reached over 239,000 people.





Health

In **Jordan**, since 2015, IOCC has offered diagnostic, rehabilitation, and education services for people with visual, hearing, and physical disabilities in Azraq refugee camp and Jordan's urban areas. IOCC has provided devices such as hearing aids, glasses, low-vision devices, and wheelchairs to children and adults; raised community awareness about disabilities and promoted inclusion; and formed support groups for caregivers of children with disabilities. IOCC has also helped people over age 60 stay active and productive by gaining new skills while connecting them with peers and job opportunities.

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 41,900 individuals in 2021. 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 health-care centers and has upgraded, refurbished, and contributed to operating costs of centers.

In **Ethiopia**, in collaboration with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission, IOCC implemented a \$15.4 million USAID-PEPFAR-supported HIV and AIDS prevention,

awareness, care, and support program in 153 districts throughout the country. IOCC also implemented a five-year, USAID-funded HIV/AIDS prevention of mother-to-child transmission program in collaboration with IntraHealth in 57 health center catchments.

Over 12 million Ethiopian men and women were reached with general HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness messages; 370,000 women and 361,000 men received prevention messages targeting partners; and 22,000 pregnant mothers and 12,000 male partners were screened for HIV.

Beginning in 2010, IOCC has worked closely with the Ethiopian Ministry of Health and regional health bureaus on the prevention and treatment of podocniosis (nonfilarial elephantiasis) with the goal of helping eliminate the disease in Ethiopia. Community interventions include education on the importance of shoe-wearing, self-care methods, and hygiene; over 850,000 primary-school children received shoes. The projects prioritize the training of health professionals in podocniosis prevention and treatment. Ultimately, over 65,275 Ethiopians have received treatment and knowledge on disease management; over a million have received awareness education at community events and public awareness campaigns; and more than 1,100 midlevel government healthcare workers have been trained on disease and related issues with the aim of integrating podocniosis treatment into the government health system.



Food Security and Agriculture

IOCC's work in this sector includes projects designed to improve production and yields, strengthen livestock-management practices, improve natural-resource management, increase access to markets, promote women's inclusion in agricultural value chains, and build the capacity of NGO partners to provide technical assistance to program participants.

In **Gaza and the West Bank** from the early 2000s to 2017, IOCC implemented multiple projects to promote food security, women's economic participation, and general economic development through home gardens, apiculture, livestock, water cisterns, and training in the production and sale of animal products.

In **Bosnia and Georgia**, IOCC has helped revitalize the agricultural sectors in targeted villages by supporting farmer cooperatives, providing greenhouses, agricultural machinery, livestock and seedlings, and extensive training to hundreds of beneficiaries. The programming increased food security and household income for returnees, IDPs, and residents by providing grants, business and marketing training, and technical assistance. The program also supported the growth, development, and institutional capacity of local NGOs.

In **Kosovo**, IOCC worked with the Diocese of Raška and Prizren to establish a grain mill that allowed farmers to expand production knowing there was an established buyer ready to process their wheat. Farmers planted more hectares and increased their incomes thanks to this project.



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.

Sustainable Livelihoods

IOCC's livelihoods programs, often initiated during or shortly after a crisis, create sustainable long-term solutions by helping individuals increase their marketable skills and helping them start businesses or gain employment. Loans, vocational training, life-skills building, and job fairs are all part of a broad-based approach that supports people in building existing skills and developing new ones.

Since 2002, when a USDA-funded microcredit program began in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, IOCC has disbursed over 20,500 loans worth more than \$30.9 million. IOCC's loan portfolio has supported activities in agriculture, trade, services, and small-scale production. Of that loan capital, 35% has been disbursed to women, and an estimated additional 20,000 people have indirectly benefitted from this program. Since 2002, IOCC has created more than 1,000 new sustainable jobs and supported over 2,200 existing businesses through this program. One of the indicators that the program is well tailored and attractive to entrepreneurs is that 1,085 clients have received a loan three or more times. An indicator of the program's positive impact on the economy is that the maximum amount allowed per loan in 2007 was \$10,000, and in 2010 it was \$35,000. The overall repayment rate is more than 99%.

In **Gaza and the West Bank**, IOCC opened three vocational centers in 2018 where hundreds of young adults

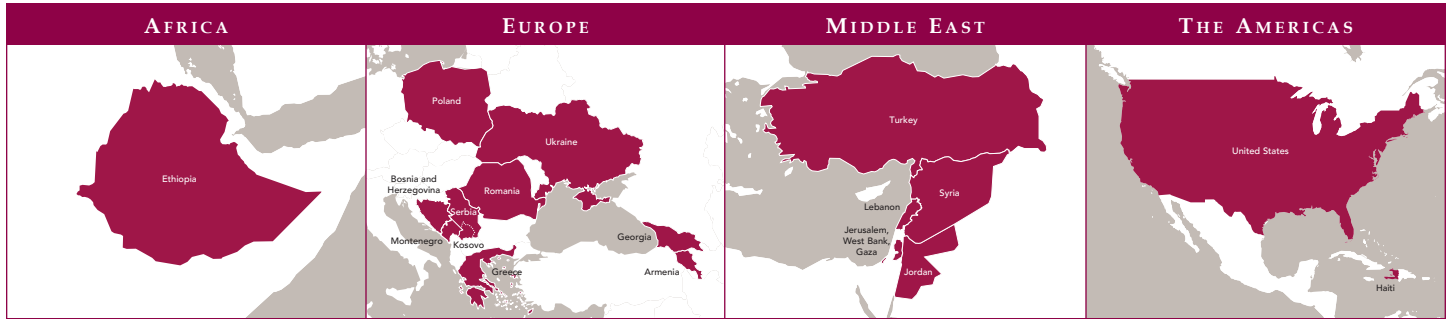
train for in-demand sectors like technology, mobile phone repair, solar power, and more. IOCC has also placed hundreds of 18- to 24-year-old high-school and university graduates with community organizations where they honed their professional skills and helped those groups serve their communities.

In 2013 in **Jordan**, IOCC began to organize vocational and employability-skills training for adults, who can choose from over 40 class and trade options, including electrical wiring, e-marketing, auto repair, and cooking. After training, participants have helped repair homes for people in need; received grants to start their own businesses; attended job fairs to connect with employers; and participated in job coaching through IOCC's Livelihood Resource Center to be matched with potential employment opportunities.

In 2022-2023, IOCC helped farmers establish and equip a business-oriented solar-drying fruit and vegetable processing cooperative in western **Georgia**, where members now bring their produce and for drying so they can sell it at market. Similarly, in 2019-2020, IOCC organized rural farming families into groups that each share a solar-powered dryer. Drying increases both the value of agricultural products and their shelf life because dried produce can be sold year-round. Thus, family incomes grow and become more reliable.



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



●	Emergency Preparedness & Response	150,044
●	Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene (WASH).....	40,362
●	Sustainable Livelihoods.....	2,869
●	Food Security & Agriculture.....	129,203
●	Health	607,594
●	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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