

Greece

IOCC's history in Greece began with the Athens field office, a regional hub from 1993 to 2009. Since 2012, IOCC has worked closely with Apostoli, the philanthropic organization of the Archdiocese of Athens under the Church of Greece, to program over \$60 million in monetary and in-kind support in the country.

Emergency Response

In August 2024, a fire broke out in forestland near Varnavas village-Attica, 25 miles north of the city of Athens and expanded to a much greater region; after burning for almost a week, the fire destroyed 102,780 acres of rural areas including houses, business premises, vehicles, public structures, and agricultural land. IOCC/Apostoli's emergency response supported twelve fire-affected families with household vouchers.

In September 2023, torrential rain flooded homes and businesses and destroyed infrastructure in central Greece. IOCC/Apostoli in

consultation with local municipal and church authorities in Magnesia and Karditsa regions assessed the urgent needs of the affected population and responded with potable water in the city of Volos and hot meals for five weeks for the 250 villagers of Marathea village.

In 2024, IOCC/Apostoli in close cooperation with the municipal and school authorities, repaired the public primary school and kindergarten of Marathea to ensure that local students, which were enrolled to other schools in the greater region following the flood, can return safely to their school.



Emergency Response *(continued)*



In 2021, devastating fires on Evia burned 133,000 acres, about one-third of the island. IOCC directly implemented an extensive fire relief program designed for damaged houses, fire-affected small businesses, resin collectors, and livestock farmers, as well as health centers in the fire-affected municipalities of Limni-Mantoudi-Agia Anna and Istiaia-Aidipsos.

Overall, IOCC directly assisted about 600 families with home-equipment vouchers, monthly supermarket vouchers, animal feed, technical equipment for businesses, and one ambulance each for the Mantoudi health center and the Istiaia health center. IOCC supplied home-equipment vouchers so homeowners could repair and refurnish fire-damaged houses and provided technical equipment to ruined businesses so they could resume production. Livestock farmers in fire-affected villages received approximately 1,000 tons of animal feed. In Attica, which was affected by fires around the same time, IOCC provided home equipment vouchers to more than 50 fire-affected households.

Following the fires of summer 2021 across Evia, Attica, and the Peloponnese, IOCC provided emergency assistance to affected households and small businesses, as well as school supplies for students in affected areas as they began the school year.

In 2018, IOCC offered emergency assistance and provisions, including cash vouchers to families who had lost their homes and livelihoods in East Attica due to destructive fast-moving fires. The aid allowed families to restock basic home items (furniture, kitchenware) and ensured that their children had the supplies they needed for school.

Between 2015 and 2017, IOCC helped more than 250,000 refugees in Greece with over \$3 million in aid, including emergency food supplies, winterization materials, water and sanitation infrastructure in camps, education, and psychosocial services. IOCC provided support on several islands and the mainland to refugees in camps and community settings. Education services included both formal support, such as tutoring in math and life-skills, and helping youth adjust to their new setting through Greek language and culture lessons. IOCC provided winter clothing to refugees and ensured shelters on Greek islands were appropriately winterized. Temporary WASH, nonfood, and food support was also provided to refugees, many of whom were rapidly moving through island transit centers to more sustainable locations while their asylum status was determined. IOCC worked closely with UN organizations, the Greek government (local and national), and other NGOs to respond to the crisis and meet the evolving needs of new arrivals during these two years. Since 2012, IOCC has provided over \$6 million in food aid to vulnerable families in the region.

The unprecedented wildfires in the Peloponnese in 2007 killed 65 people and destroyed vineyards, olive groves, and pasture, as well as thousands of heads of livestock. On-the-ground assessments determined that farmers needed animal feed to sustain their remaining livestock, and in spring 2008, IOCC distributed 2,635 metric tons of feed to 4,400 fire-affected farmers. In autumn 2008, IOCC distributed 58 metric tons of forage seed to help 690 fire-affected farmers recover their pasture.

Food Security and Agriculture

In response to the 2021 wildfires on Evia, IOCC provided new technical equipment to over a dozen ruined businesses on Evia and approximately 1,000 tons of animal feed to fire-affected farmers there to support continued production. Examples of technical equipment include a lathe for a motorcycle workshop to resume fabricating accessories, digital interactive screens for a language-school's classrooms, and air-conditioning systems for a guesthouse.

After the disastrous 2007 fires in the Peloponnese, IOCC helped rebuild the agriculture capacity of farmers who suffered severe losses, including providing forage seed to livestock farms of various sizes.

In 2009, IOCC partnered with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and the Pan-Cretan Association in America to establish a well-organized modern soil laboratory in the fire-affected region of Ileia in the Peloponnese. Prior to this, no soil laboratories existed in the area, and farmers had to send their soil samples to Athens for analysis. Following the official opening ceremony, the soil laboratory began providing services to an estimated 100,000 local farmers. The entire population of 800,000 on the Western

Peloponnese also benefitted indirectly from the services provided by the center.

Since 2015, IOCC worked with agricultural associations to improve the agricultural output of individual members as well as the overall management of the associations. IOCC has helped associations identify investments that allow farmers to add value to raw products, create marketing strategies for these value-added products, and, for the first time, access export markets.

Many rural associations have traditionally sold their products only locally because requirements and processes for shipping to other parts of the EU were complicated, expensive, and difficult to understand.

IOCC has connected farmers with business mentors who help them navigate the export process and obtain licenses. Licensing helps producers increase revenue by selling in new markets where their products do not compete with those of other local producers. Mentors also advise on core business operations, such as creating a business plan, marketing, and scaling up production and sales.



Argyro Koutsouradi "Myrovolos Organics"



Agronomist - herbs cultivator in Chios island

Sustainable Livelihoods

One of IOCC's main programs in Greece has been its work creating jobs, strengthening livelihoods, and helping microbusinesses and agribusinesses in sectors like the agrofood and creative industries throughout Greece. Under the IOCC model, associations and microbusinesses with at least two years of operation are invited to submit a proposal for a grant to help expand the business and create new jobs.

In 2024 IOCC/Apostoli organized two Marketing Seminars for all businesses that had benefited from the livelihoods project in previous years, with KEMEL (Center for Volunteer Managers of Greece) volunteer engagement as instructors. Their

guidance empowered participants to navigate challenges effectively and enhance their competitiveness in the marketplace. The two seminars were held in Athens and Thessaloniki with the participation of 95 businesses.

In addition to those in the agriculture sector, microenterprises that process a raw material such as leather, wood, and metals into a finished product are prioritized in the selection process. Grants are typically about \$9,500 and are made in kind—that is, the proposal requests equipment, services (e.g., quality certification), or other business inputs that IOCC procures and delivers to the grantee.



Sustainable Livelihoods *(continued)*

Another important component of the process is business mentoring. IOCC works with successful business leaders to mentor grantees over a six-month period following the grant.

The mentoring may be related to their core business process, but it also might be about other aspects of running a successful business, such as financial management, HR practices, training, or marketing. It might also involve management consulting to help a business obtain an export license so it can ship its products to other locations in the EU.

Since 2015, IOCC has helped over 195 microbusinesses and agricultural associations throughout Greece with more than \$2,3 million in new production equipment, technical services, and business mentoring to help them improve productivity and profitability, and help them become sustainable employers in their communities.

(photo right) The younger member of "Tsaknis Creamery" in Kilkis/Macedonia



Marketing Seminar in Athens



Aris and Ioanna Nikolau siblings and producers of sun-dried tomatoes in Kamari, Viotia



Marketing Seminar in Thessaloniki



The ladies of Woman Association "Mouses" produce pasta products in Pieria/Macedonia



Health

Amid Greece's economic crisis, IOCC has helped public hospitals throughout the country care for thousands of people with over \$50 million worth of essential supplies like surgical gloves, syringes, and blood-sample vials. Since 2011, in-kind donations of such

basics have helped healthcare providers weather the shortages that became common during the economic crisis. IOCC works closely with government partners to target donations to hospitals experiencing shortages to ensure continuity of care for basic services.

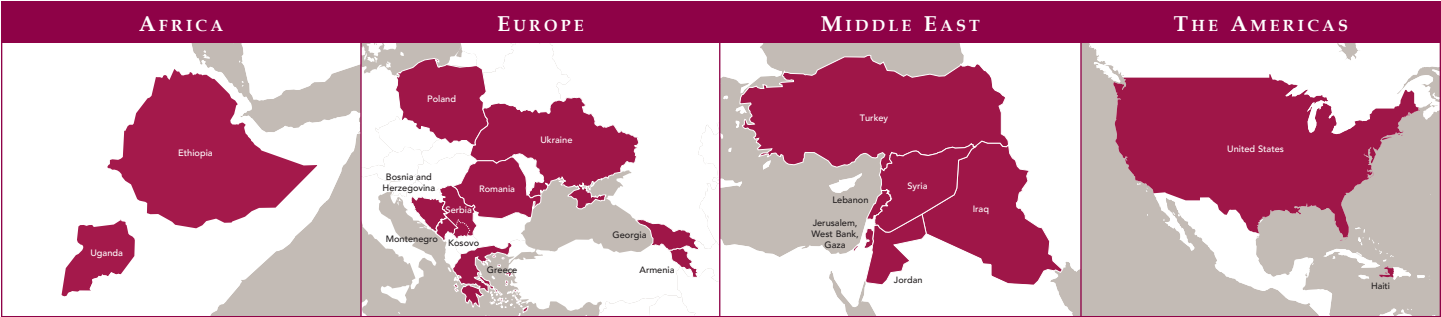
Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)



During the refugee crisis of 2015–2017, IOCC provided WASH services to some 50,000 people. Infrastructure works and renovation of sanitary facilities were done in the refugee camps on Samos and Chios islands, including delivery of new showers and portable toilets.

On the Greek mainland, repairs, delivery of new sanitary facilities, and hygiene awareness campaigns were implemented in Agios Andreas, Rafina, Lavrio, Malakasa, Elefsina, Oinofita, Thermopiles, Oraikastro, and Softex refugee camps. Seven sanitary containers were installed at the Softex and Oreokastro refugee camps in northern Greece, while seven were installed in Malakasa, and three in Oinofita.

Active Worldwide Programs



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



Emergency Preparedness & Response	110,270
Sustainable Livelihoods	26,290
Food Security & Agriculture	108,902
Health	742,444
Other (Education, Nonfood Items, Shelter, Protection)	159,618

IN 2024, IOCC SERVED 1,147,524 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 \$858 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.