

IOCC Capacity Statement

In its over 33 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, primarily the local Orthodox Church's humanitarian agency and other local NGOs. Capacity building and strengthening 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 the Holy Land, Ukraine, Syria, Georgia, Iraq, Lebanon, 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.

Since the start of the conflict in **Gaza** in 2023, IOCC has been providing support to individuals and families in desperate need. This assistance has included essential items such as water, food supplies and hot meals, blankets, medicines, cooking gas, generator fuel, hygiene items, and psychosocial care for children and adults.

Most recently, in 2024 and 2025, recognizing the profound trauma inflicted by the recent conflict in Gaza, IOCC extended critical support to children, both with and without disabilities, and their caregivers.

IOCC provided over 3,500 individuals with individual and group psychosocial counseling sessions, as well as engaging recreational activities, to address the pervasive anxiety,

fear, and other mental health challenges arising from the conflict.

IOCC continues to respond to the effects of the conflict in **Ukraine** through programs in **Poland**, and Ukraine. Addressing both urgent and long-term needs, programs focus on three key areas: emergency assistance, livelihood opportunities (including business training and small grants for start-ups) and integration support (including language training, integration activities, and cash assistance).



Emergency Preparedness and Response *(continued)*



In **Lebanon**, IOCC's emergency response efforts aimed to support internally displaced persons (IDPs) who fled conflict zones and assist returnees following the ceasefire that took effect in late November 2024. In Mount Lebanon, under the IOCC emergency fund, a range of support was provided to displaced individuals and families. This included the distribution of mattresses, blankets, and hot meals, along with the kitchen supplies and serving supplies necessary for the distribution of hot meals. In North Lebanon and Beirut, IOCC was able to provide hot meals, offer psychosocial support, and distribute menstrual hygiene kits to females of reproductive age.

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. In 2021 alone, WASH initiatives in Lebanon reached over 239,000 people.

In **Uganda**, 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 rain-

water-harvesting systems on school buildings to collect water that boarding students use for laundry and bathing. This pilot project also trained partners and school staff on these techniques.

Since the outset of the **Syria** conflict in 2011, IOCC has also conducted regular hygiene promotion and awareness activities for displaced persons in order to prevent WASH-related diseases in targeted areas, reaching almost 100,000 vulnerable individuals. IOCC has also rehabilitated a number of wells, equipping them with water pumps and restoring the water supply for hundreds of thousands of people. In 2024, a water pump was installed in Hassakeh Governorate, providing a water resource to over 400,000 people and preventing a further outbreak of cholera.

In **Gaza**, 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.



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 integration; 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.

In **Lebanon**, IOCC improves the health of vulnerable people by increasing their access to quality, comprehensive primary healthcare services—including mental health and specialized diagnosis and treatment—by supporting a network of primary health care centers.

IOCC also improves access to secondary healthcare services in south and north Lebanon by contributing to the inpatient medical costs of vulnerable individuals. In underserved areas, IOCC helps thousands of people access primary healthcare through running mobile medical units, providing mental health, psychosocial support and emergency cash assistance.

Mother-child health and nutrition is a top focus, including malnutrition screening, treatment, and health education for parents.

IOCC works closely with the Ministry of Public Health to build the staff capacity of healthcare facilities on nutrition, early child development, Baby Friendly Hospital Initiatives, immunization and other health topics.





Health *(continued)*

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/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 podoconiosis 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 mid-level government healthcare workers have been trained on disease and related issues with the aim of integrating podoconiosis 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**, more than 4,500 households (benefiting over 30,000 family members) have received agricultural supplies and training for home gardens or greenhouses, livestock care or beekeeping, and water cisterns for agricultural irrigation.

Hundreds of women have participated in IOCC's agricultural activities, trained in farming and marketing, and received specialized equipment like solar-powered herb dryers, helping them grow food for their families and for income at market.

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.



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.

At present, millions in **Ukraine** are still negotiating the realities of ongoing conflict, with many of these households led by women who have relocated with their children to safer areas. Ensuring access to livelihood opportunities and economic empowerment is vital, as they seek reliable sources of income to feed their children and support their families.

IOCC and our on-the-ground local partners are helping hundreds of displaced women gain vocational and business skills, giving them business grants to build sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families, and contribute to their communities' economic development. Vocational training and

business grants such as these give these women the opportunity to learn and to make themselves more competitive in the marketplace.

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%.



Sustainable Livelihoods *(continued)*

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.

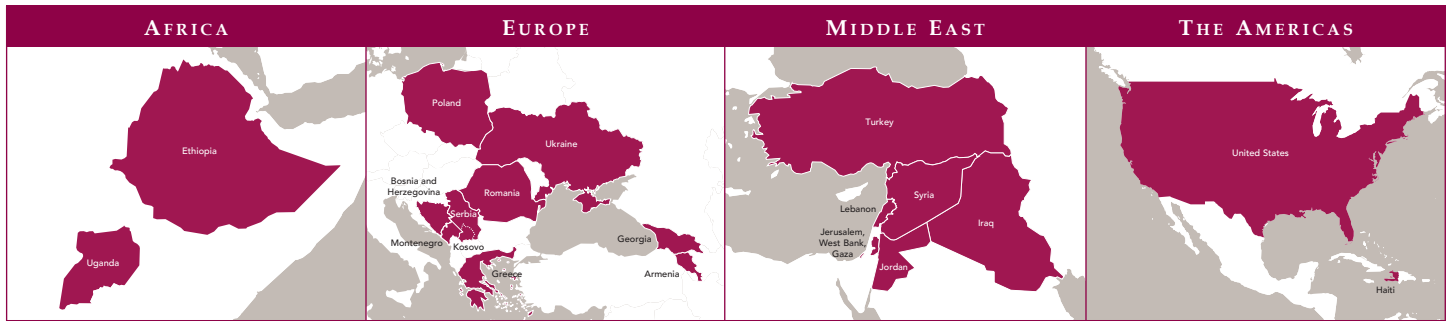


In 2013 in **Jordan**, IOCC began to organize vocational and employability-skills training for adults, who can choose from over 40 class and trade options, including electrical wiring, e-marketing, auto repair, and cooking. After training, participants have helped repair homes for people in need; received 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 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
- 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



Total Persons Served

● 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 MORE THAN 1.1 MILLION 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 (BHA, PRM) and the United Nations (UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, OCHA), as well as with European and international donors.



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