



Jordan - Huda now enjoys playing with other children during IOCC's play sessions.

Huda's Journey to New Friendships

FINDING HELP AT AZRAQ CAMP IN JORDAN: HEALTH

Huda was a small girl when her family was forced to flee the conflict in Syria. It was a frightening and dangerous journey for Huda, who has Down Syndrome, her two brothers (one of whom has a mental disability), and their single mother.

They made the arduous trek mostly on foot, finally catching a ride on a livestock truck to Jordan. But the ordeal had taken its toll. Huda began to suffer serious breathing problems and needed emergency heart surgery—with nine months of follow-up care.

The family eventually found safety in Jordan's Azraq Camp, where Huda's mother made the hard decision to leave the children at home while she earned some income working in the camp.

IOCC provides refugee services at the camp for struggling families like Huda's. Her brother, Khaled, had his vision

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From the
**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**



Dear friends,

The new year has dawned, still brightened by the light of Christ's Nativity. And as 2026 begins, so does our opportunity to create new beginnings for people who are facing hardship.

Thanks to your faithful support of IOCC's programs, you bring hope and help to families to overcome difficulties such as natural disaster, extreme poverty, conflict, or chronic disease, and make a fresh start.

In this edition of *News & Needs*, you'll meet Huda, a young Syrian girl who had to flee her homeland and needed emergency medical treatment. You'll also learn how an Ethiopian couple overcame disease and poverty, and how a family in Georgia who lost their home are rebuilding their life.

As you read their stories, remember—it is your support that helps our brothers and sisters around the world to regain their self-sufficiency—and their dignity.

Thank you and we wish you a blessed New Year.

Yours in Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

cover story continued

tested at an IOCC clinic, where he received glasses. At the same clinic, Huda had her vision evaluated. She was diagnosed with reduced visual sharpness and obstruction of her tear ducts and was referred to a specialist for treatment.

With Huda's mother working away from home, Huda was able to participate in recreation sessions organized by IOCC. She enjoyed spending time and playing with children, including those with disabilities. And she met other families, who offered help and support.

Huda's morale improved greatly—and so did her mother's. "I am sincerely grateful to IOCC," Huda's mother said, "for organizing an activity that allowed Huda to be included and engage with new friends."

IOCC has reached more than 10,000 people in Azraq Camp with support, including health services to those living with disabilities like Huda, since 2017.



SHARE YOUR LENTEN RECIPES!

Email outreach@iocc.org to have your recipe considered for our Lenten series.



Curing Disease Was Only the Beginning

A BRIGHTER FUTURE IN ETHIOPIA: HEALTH, LIVELIHOODS

Asasu is a mother of two in Ethiopia. She earns a very modest income growing and selling vegetables. Supporting a family through farming is difficult, making it harder is the fact that both she and her husband live with podoconiosis (podo). This crippling, painful disease attacks the feet and legs, making physical work extremely difficult.

“The disease affected our health, social life, and livelihood,” says Asasu. Fighting the disease and struggling to make ends meet, Asasu learned of a lifeline when she heard about an IOCC-supported health center where they received podoconiosis treatment and learned how to prevent it.

Both she and her husband regained their health—but her family was still barely getting by on the income from their small farm. IOCC and Filantropia, the Orthodox Church of Finland’s international aid agency, were able to offer a solution.

Asasu was one of 24 beneficiaries selected to receive seed money to raise sheep and bees.

She received 10,000 BR (about \$65). With the money she bought a modern beehive and three sheep for raising and selling.

The bees are beginning to produce honey, and the sheep are growing well. And like any good businessperson, Asasu is planning for the future.



Ethiopia - Asasu and her husband can now work without the pain of podo.

“Sheep fattening gives a good return,” she said. “I plan to sell and reinvest and will not use the capital until my business is secure.”

With her health restored and a new business to support her family, Asasu’s future looks much brighter.

IOCC’S FIVE SECTORS

IOCC’s work spans the globe and covers five key sectors of humanitarian relief and sustainable development:

- Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)
- Sustainable Livelihoods
- Food Security and Agriculture
- Health

International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC), is the official humanitarian relief and development agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America.

IOCC, in the spirit of Christ’s love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond.

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Sowing Seeds of Hope in Georgia

CREATING OPPORTUNITY FROM ADVERSITY: LIVELIHOODS

Bachuki's family had faced years of hardship. Two of his five children have disabilities, his wife became bedridden after illness, and their house had been destroyed in a powerful windstorm. The sole caregiver for his family, Bachuki was unable to work and struggled to support his family, "I think every day about how to save my family."

But a small plot of land behind their new home provided fresh hope, when Bachuki learned about an IOCC program in his village.

The program showed Bachuki and his family how to sow seeds for rare crops during the winter and early spring. He learned how to transplant the seedlings and received training in irrigation and general plot maintenance.

IOCC supplied seeds, fertilizers, and a drip irrigation system, including pipes and reservoirs with all necessary joints and taps. Pumps, electrical cables, and pipes were installed to connect the drip irrigation system to the main water source in the house, and cassettes were provided for the seedling production.

"IOCC helped me keep going," Bachuki said. He continued, "they showed me how to use my small piece of land in winter to grow crops we can sell. This is not just training, it's hope. If this small plot succeeds, I will use a larger one next year for cash crops, which will help me handle this tough life."

Bachuki's experience is also shared by others in his community. A total of 30 families in the region will benefit from this IOCC program.



Georgia - One of Bachuki's sons has learned to sow winter and early spring seedlings.