

Faith Based and Community Initiatives



USDA
Education

United States
Department of
Agriculture

International Orthodox Christian Charities

McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program

Stories of Success.

Thirteen-year-old Rana and her 8-year-old brother, Ali, are students at Al Shiyyah Public School in Beirut, one of 181 public schools being served by IOCC's nutrition and education program in Lebanon. As they speak, their eyes tell a sad story of neglect. "I like going to school," Rana said, "but last year, we had to stay in the streets, my brother and I, because we had no money or food." Now, thanks to the intervention of school officials and IOCC, the children have a place to stay and at least one healthy meal a day.



How the Initiative is Helping.

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative is working to connect groups like the International Orthodox Christian Charities with the Foreign Agricultural Service programs, such as the McGovern-Dole Food for Education program.

The Organization.

For two consecutive school years, IOCC has successfully implemented a school lunch program in Lebanon. The program provides daily school lunches and educational materials to thousands of disadvantaged public school children in Beirut and its suburbs, southern Lebanon and the northern Akkar district.

The program is funded by the sale of surplus agricultural commodities donated to IOCC by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). According to public health experts, a high proportion of public school children in Lebanon suffer from deficiencies in iron, vitamin A and iodine because they come from low-income households. By providing school lunches, the program encourages students to stay in school and offers them the prospect of a better education. The school lunches include a daily meal with milk or fruit juice.

The IOCC/USDA program also distributes booklets and educational literature that address proper health, hygiene practices, environment and civic issues. Students also receive stationery, pencils, pens, notebooks and other education supplies.

The University of Balamand's Faculty of Health Sciences, in coordination with the Lebanese Ministry of Education, developed the educational component of the program. IOCC also incorporated the local "Captain Mike" milk drinking campaign into its program so that children learn the benefits of drinking milk. In addition, parents attend lectures addressing the issues of health and nutrition.

IOCC rehabilitated the infrastructure of 14 public schools after doing an assessment on beneficiary schools. Sanitation and water systems were repaired to offer students a cleaner, better learning environment.

