

One Great Hour of Sharing United Church of Christ

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2009 Mission Report

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One Great Hour of Sharing United Church of Christ Wider Church Ministries

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**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



Multiplying our OGHS dollars increases the results

Sometimes One Great Hour of Sharing offering money is multiplied, so that the return on investment accomplishes much more to relieve hunger or encourage entrepreneurship than the original contributions.

Two such organizations supported by OGHS funds that accomplish those goals are **Foods Resource Bank (FRB)** and **Oikocredit**. Here your contribution is not just a gift,



W. Evan Golder photo

Micro-loans help women start their own businesses.

but an investment in the lives of others.

With **Foods Resource Bank**, local farmers plant and harvest a crop. Sometimes they use a rented field, or a field that is supported financially by others, such as local churches, individuals or entire communities. After the crop is harvested, it is contributed to FRB.

Then, instead of paying high shipping costs to send food supplies overseas, the original crops are sold and FRB uses the funds to provide seeds, tools, training and other resources to respond to hunger around the world.

Every One Great Hour of Sharing dollar the UCC sends to Foods Resource Bank produces \$5 worth of food.

Oikocredit is one of the world's largest sources of private microfinancing. It provides funds for life-changing loans to the poor and disadvantaged, with a special emphasis on rural areas and women.

Access to available credit empowers those in need to invest in themselves. With even the smallest of loans, they can create income-generating businesses, send their children to school, buy medicine and nutritious food, or fix a leaky roof.

Most micro-loans are fewer than 100 dollars. Despite a lack of collateral, repayment rates typically exceed 95 percent.

OGHS Live!

Presents Educational Mission Trip

One Great Hour of Sharing announces the first International Educational Mission Trip to the Dominican Republic and Haiti, Fall 2010.

For more information or to register, visit our website at:
<www.ucc.org/oghs>



OGHS supports training for budding beauticians

DAMASCUS, SYRIA — Angelique Al Asmar did not mince words when speaking of the plight of the estimated 1.2 million Iraqi refugees in Syria.

"It's heart-breaking," said the 24-year-old vocational training officer with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All The East.

It is indeed. Many Iraqis are stuck in limbo, awaiting word if they will be able to leave Syria and join relatives elsewhere. Their impatience is fueled by bitter memories of violence in Iraq and a determination not to return to their homeland, perhaps ever.

The work of the Patriarchate, supported by gifts from One Great Hour of Sharing, gives some sense of hope and stability to Iraqi women whose lives, and lives of their families, have been gravely disrupted by the six-year Iraqi war.

Some of that work was on full display last September as a group of Iraqi refugee women showed off their skills as beauticians at a Saturday skills-training program at a Damascus beauty parlor.

On this morning, spirits were high. As the women applied makeup to each other, giggles were common.

"We have good results, but sometimes it's awful," Al Asmar said, laughing.

The classes are not only ways for refugee women to acquire skills in makeup application and hairdressing and find steady jobs in Damascus, but also a way "to forget



Paul Jeffrey/ACT photo

Iraqi refugee women show off their skills as beauticians

sorrows," said Al Asmar.

The sorrows are just below the surface, the stories of friends and relatives killed in Iraq, of separation and uncertainty as families await word if they will immigrate to the United States, Canada or Australia.

Still, for a few precious moments, these Saturday mornings become moments to savor, laugh and look to the future with optimism.

Adapted from a story by Chris Herlinger, Church World Service