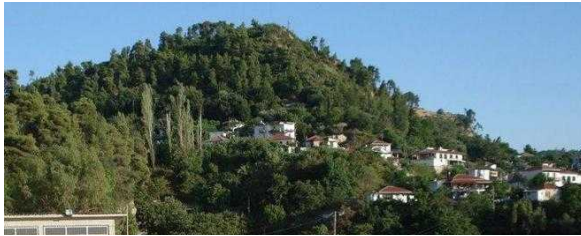


PELOPONNESUS PROJECT

The summer of 2007 was disastrous for Greece, especially for Peloponnesus. Extensive wild fires destroyed most of the western part, burning approximately 500.000 olive trees, villages, homes and killing about 70 people.



The village of Agia Anna before and after the fires

The Greek Evangelical Church, through the initiative of the Second Ev. Church of Athens, started a ministry called "Symparastasi" (literally: Standing Together). The Peloponnesus Project of Symparastasi includes four phases so far. For a detailed picture documentation and additional information, please visit www.symparastasi.gr

We initially "adopted" the village of Koutsohera because we were able to start a partnership with the local leaders. Very soon we expanded in almost all the Municipality of Oleni that includes 16 villages and is located right beside Ancient Olympia.

PHASE 1: HUMANITARIAN AID

For about 7 months (**August 2007 –February 2008**), twice a month a team, made up of members from the Athens area churches, traveled back and forth the 700 km in order to give food to the people, animal feed for the rest of the animal stock that was spared, a few sheep, etc.

The animal feed was very important to them, as all of their land was burned and the sheep had really no place to graze.



Approximately 120 people participated, some of them very consistently, some others occasionally.

We gave away:

- Approximately 10 tons of food
- 311 boxes of hygiene aid.
- Approximately 50 tons of animal feed
- 1615 bales of hay
- 30 sheep
- 50 boxes with clothes
- 20 boxes with children's gifts



PHASE 2: CUTTING TREES AND CREATING SAFE ZONES NEXT TO THE ROADS

This phase took place during **November and December of 2007**. Volunteer teams came through the Baptist Global Response (BGR), staying for two weeks each. They were assisted by a number of Greek volunteers.



PHASE 3: TREE PLANTING PROJECT

In **October of 2008** we planted almost 4.000 trees in the 16 villages of the Municipality of Oleni. For one week a group of 12 Greeks from the Greek Evangelical Church and 12 Dutch from the Reformed Church, Holland volunteered in this phase. In the last day our volunteers became 75 as the Youth of our Churches joined us.



Dr. Nikolaos Kantartzis, former elder of our Church in Thessaloniki and former professor of Landscape Architecture of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Agriculture University of Athens, was in charge of the project. The city council approved his proposal, so we were able to make it happen.



We planted trees outside schools, churches, cemeteries, one monastery, as well as in the entrances and exits of most of the 16 villages that belong to the Municipality of Oleni. We

covered a distance of 16 km.

The Mayor of Oleni, Mr. Ioannis Panagopoulos, assisted us providing trucks, workers and dirt. His constant presence, as well as the presence of the governor of the prefecture of Ilia (the Prefecture where Oleni is located), Mr. Charalambos Kafiras was very encouraging. The local newspapers wrote very positive reports about our efforts.



PHASE 4: ENVIRONMENTAL PLANIFICATION

In **December of 2008** Professor Kostis Koutsopoulos, of the Polytechnic University of Athens, an elder of our Church in the Northern Suburbs of Athens, agreed to provide the mayor of Oleni plans for the physical landscape development of Oleni. Dr. Koutsopoulos also will train one person to use the Geographical Information System for the Municipality of Oleni, through which they will be able to better develop the cultivation of the land and the town planning.

PHASE 5: 'CARING' FOR THE TREES WE PLANTED

This Fall (2009) we are planning to visit the villages and in cooperation with the local people to cultivate and water the trees we planted.