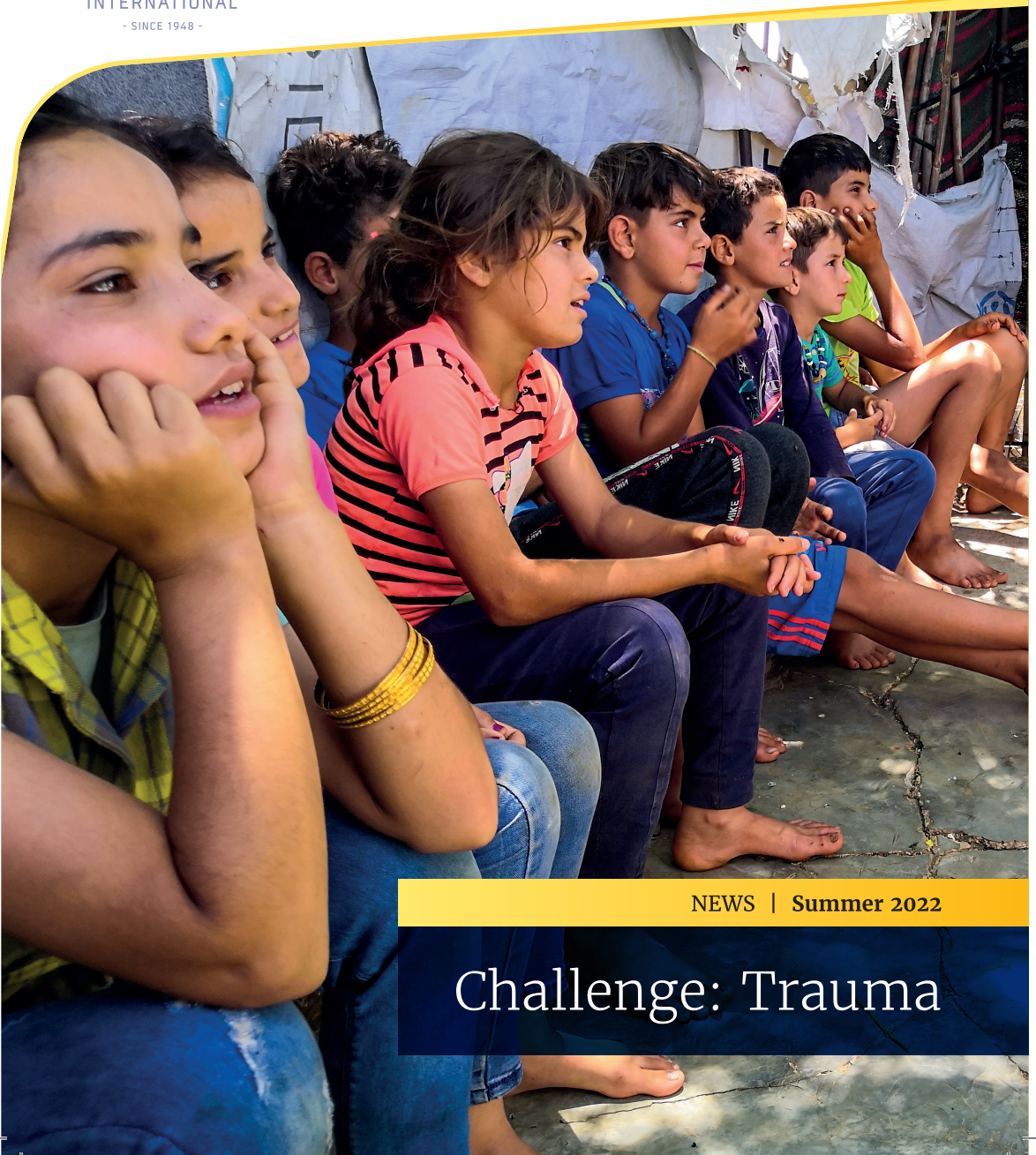




Grain of Wheat  
INTERNATIONAL  
- SINCE 1948 -

“Bringing hope  
to children”



NEWS | Summer 2022

Challenge: Trauma



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## HOW TO SUPPORT US

### To support our work among the children:

**Switzerland:** Wire your donation to this bank account (IBAN): CH72 0900 0000 1748 7675 5

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**USA:** Grain of Wheat International,  
P.O. Box 1125, Wheaton, IL 60187, USA.

**UK:** Grain of Wheat International,  
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## EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

As I wrote in our first newsletter, this year we are focusing on the challenges facing our teams around the world. This time we try to share something about trauma. What is it, how do children respond to it, and how does God work through our people to heal children or help them live with their trauma? This is a very complicated subject and requires a lot of patience and faith in a loving God. Of course, children in every culture face traumas, but as you can imagine, some traumas interfere with a child's life more than others. So, it always requires an understanding of culture and language to reach out to a traumatized child. This also means that we must have some knowledge of trauma before we can work with traumatized children. Despite these important issues, we serve an almighty God who can do far beyond our prayers and thoughts! So let us pray for all the children around the world who are traumatized.

Thank you for your partnership.

God bless you!

Rob Hondsmerk,  
*CEO Grain of Wheat  
International*





## The Difficult Journey to Healing

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*John 10:10 (NIV) "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full". Jesus' promise is not only for a new life, but for "life in abundance". However, while walking alongside children in Albania, we can't avoid being confronted more and more to trauma in their lives. Therefore, we need to better understand how we may support them in this journey from brokenness to wholeness.*

Trauma can be experienced because of a variety of situations. It can occur because of a single event such as a natural disaster, the loss of a loved one, a serious accident or an assault. But it can also be experienced repeatedly through witnessing domestic violence, being in a war zone or experiencing longstanding emotional or physical neglect or abuse.

All those events can have a lasting impact on children's well-being and development, bringing pain and suffering in their lives. Sin brought brokenness into the world, and

the traumas children experience today are a result of that brokenness which in turn brings pain and suffering. Being confronted with pain and suffering, especially in the lives of the most vulnerable, and accompanying children impacted by trauma can be quite difficult.

***But there is HOPE, not because of what we do but because of who God is. We know God's heart is hurting when He sees children wounded and broken.***

We know that He wants them to move from brokenness to wholeness, to experience His Peace, Hope and Healing.

*Psalm 147:3 (NIV) "He [the Lord] heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds".*

God does not always heal in the same way. He does not always heal instantaneously. But He does bring wholeness from brokenness. And what a privilege to become a vessel of God's promises. In the image of Jesus, God's gift of Presence, caring and



being present with those who hurt is expressing God's loving concern to them.

Each time we walk alongside a child in his journey from brokenness to wholeness, we may find ourselves inadequate and powerless. We know that for a child to flourish out of a very broken life, a significant power of transformation must take place. And this power can only be found in the Gospel which itself contains the magical chemistry for a New Life.

Yet, we also recognize the importance of holistic and trauma informed interventions as vectors/facilitators of this transformation.

***But we need to remember that He is the one operating the transformation and He is the source of Life out of which we can be filled and overflow.***

*Romans 15:13 (NIV) "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit".*

Together. With the King. For the Kingdom.

**Sylvain & Ruth Vergnon, Albania**





## Russia



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### **GOD CARES FOR HEARTS**

*The thing we remember most about the day 9-year-old Zumera\* and her mother Rayana\* came to our shelter, is that they were filled with fear for their lives.*

Zumera's father is a violent military man, and they never knew what would set him off or when the beating of them both would begin. On the day he threatened them with a weapon he had just purchased, Zumera and her mother decided it was time to flee to the safety of our shelter.

When we invited them to join us at camp, Rayana refused, because it was a Christian camp, but later she decided they would come after all. When they arrived at camp, Rayana was unsociable and Zumera had been so traumatized by her father's abuse, that she was intimidated and wouldn't even talk to the other children or have anything to do with them.

As we shared the story of creation and how much God loves us, Zumera listened with horror and her mother forbade us to tell her about Jesus. But as they heard the truth about who Jesus is for the very first time, God was at work in their hearts.

***We were stunned that within two days, they had both completely changed! From closed and resistant to God's Word, they were now full of questions and eager to learn. Rayana even became the most friendly and fun person at all our activities!***

Now they have new Godly friends who will surround them with prayer and lovingly come alongside to help them heal and move beyond their trauma, to a new hope-filled life with faith in Jesus.

*\*names changed*







### **JOY FOR A REFUGEE GIRL**

*GW Lebanon regularly visits Syrian refugees in their countries with a truck containing installed washing machines.*

While women have the rare opportunity to wash their families' clothes in a machine a part of our team holds children's lessons to share the Gospel and give the children an interesting diversion. We are seeing rising rates of illiteracy among the refugee children, as less and less of them can attend school due to Covid and the poor economy. In response to this, we are updating and redesigning our program, to incorporate Arabic numbers and the basic alphabet.

One of the young girls we welcomed to our new refugee camp in the South of Lebanon, happily engages with others, but rarely speaks at all. She enjoyed playing a game

where balloons are passed around in a circle, and the child holding it reads the Arabic letter or number written on it.

At first, she was eager to hold the balloon, but wouldn't say the letter. After a few more rounds, we couldn't believe our ears when she said the letter out loud!

Many children in our programs are deeply struggling emotionally and have nowhere to turn for help. Our dream has been to provide the support they so desperately need in a safe, comfortable environment. Imagine our joy when a trailer was donated for this purpose.

***We are now looking forward to bringing our counselors to these broken souls with the help and healing that only faith in Jesus can bring.***







## The Burden of Trauma

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*In South Africa, the effects of trauma are evident in our broken communities, broken families, broken marriages and broken children. The most harrowing and disturbing events put people in an extremely vulnerable state - mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. The impact and stress of these intense experiences are traumatic.*

The social problems facing our communities and families then form the backdrop and catalyst for violence. Gender-based violence and violence against women and children is an alarming problem in our country. Domestic violence, compounded by community violence where gang fights and murders take place in public spaces, continues to cause traumatic events. These traumatic events from the weekend become the stories our children tell their teachers at school on Monday.

Sexual and physical abuse and serious neglect of children often require legal inter-

vention to care for and protect these most vulnerable children.

Vulnerable communities stuck in a poverty trap of despair have developed dysfunctional means of coping with violence. Children become bystanders to mob justice and gang killings on the streets, and these extremely violent acts are seen as a "normal" event in their lives.

Repeated and prolonged exposure to trauma has life-altering effects on a child's development and impacts many aspects of his or her life, leading to secondary problems (learning difficulties in school, relationships, behavior problems, bed-wetting, insecurity, eating disorders, anger management, and health complications).

Trauma disrupts a person's sense of security, personal responsibility, and identity. It physically affects the brain's ability to function at a normal pace. It takes a team to provide the love and care the child needs to regain a place of safety and security.

***Through trauma-informed caregivers who understand the child's past, as well as trauma therapy and spiritual care, we can help rebuild and restore their lives.***

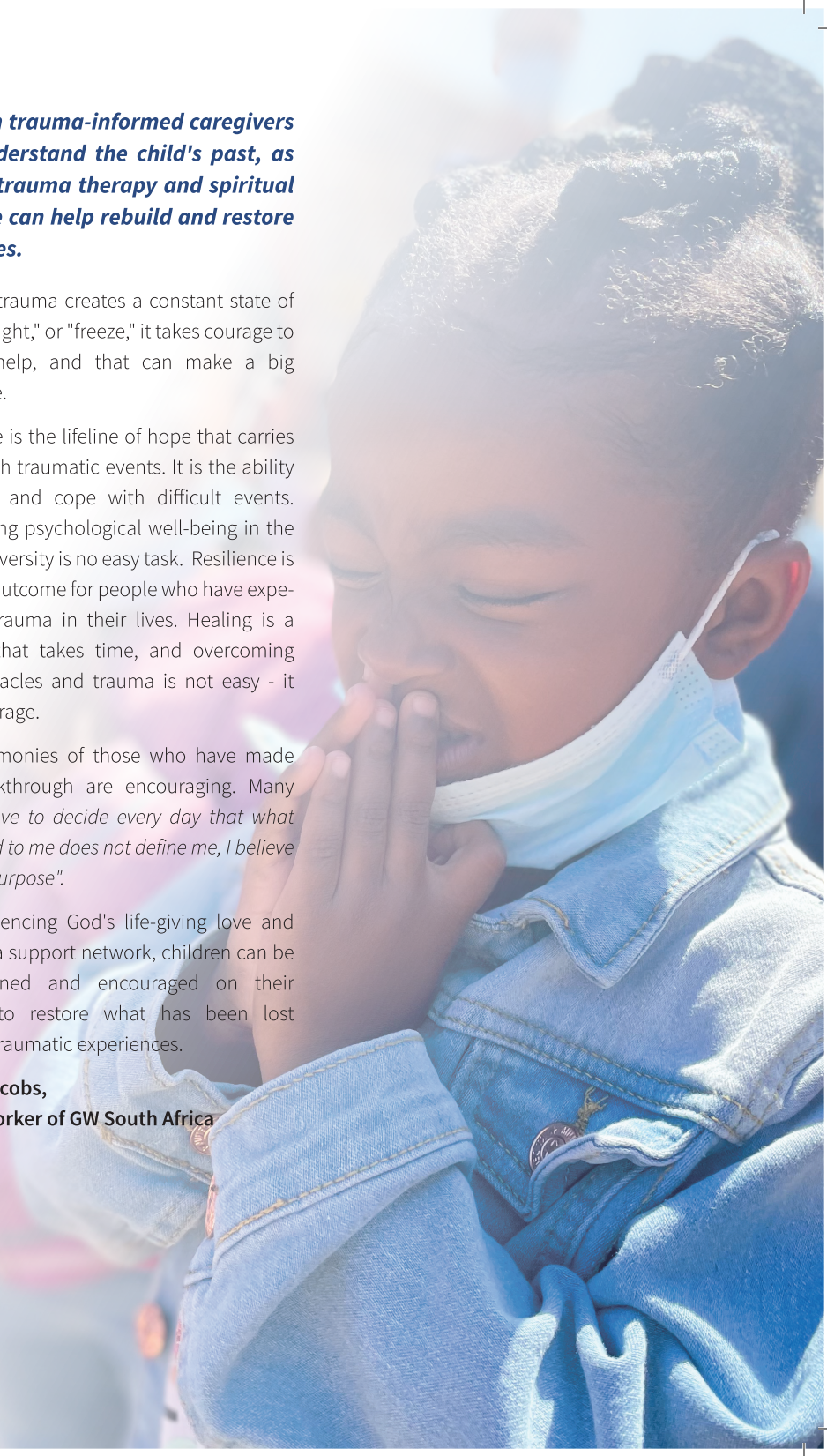
Because trauma creates a constant state of "fight," "flight," or "freeze," it takes courage to ask for help, and that can make a big difference.

Resilience is the lifeline of hope that carries us through traumatic events. It is the ability to adapt and cope with difficult events. Maintaining psychological well-being in the face of adversity is no easy task. Resilience is the best outcome for people who have experienced trauma in their lives. Healing is a process that takes time, and overcoming past obstacles and trauma is not easy - it takes courage.

The testimonies of those who have made the breakthrough are encouraging. Many say, *"I have to decide every day that what happened to me does not define me, I believe I have a purpose"*.

By experiencing God's life-giving love and building a support network, children can be strengthened and encouraged on their journey to restore what has been lost through traumatic experiences.

**Glenis Jacobs,**  
**Social Worker of GW South Africa**







### **THE LONG JOURNEY TO HEALING**

*Rose\*, age 12 almost died as a result of the traumatic abuse she suffered at the hands of her parents.*

She remembers that there was no stability in her home, as her parents were addicted to alcohol and were in a drunken stupor every day from morning till night. Because of this, she and her siblings had to fend for themselves on every level. When it came to food, they often went to bed hungry, not knowing where their next meal would come from.

The domestic violence Rose lived with was even more traumatizing. She remembers being slammed against the wall by her father because she ate her sister's food, and seeing her father attack her mother with a hammer. She was sexually abused and even slept in her dog's kennel just to stay warm.

As a result of this, she was anorexic and so severely malnourished that she needed to be hospitalized. The prolonged trauma she had endured almost cost her life. The children were finally removed from their parents and placed in a safe foster home.

***In this prayer-filled home, Rose was given the lifeline of hope in Jesus as she was cared for and supported by her Godly foster parents.***

Although the memories do not go away, with counseling and loving interventions, she has begun to heal from her past trauma and has even overcome her eating disorder.

With a joy-filled heart, she loves to share with others whose souls have been broken by trauma, that like her, they can find hope, healing and victory through faith in Jesus.

*\* name changed*








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# PRAY

When we hear stories about children who have been inhumanely traumatized, our heart longs to help in any way we can, yet we feel so inadequate and powerless. No matter how much we care, God cares even more. So, there is something powerful we can do to help. We can commit to holding them in our heart with prayers that they will turn to Jesus, the restorer of broken souls.

**As you consider this, will you join us in prayer that:**

- Children will have the courage to ask for help.
- God will lead these children to someone who will come alongside them with the Good News of Jesus' love for them.
- God will heal their deep wounds.



**The Family Corner**

Have each child cut out a heart on red paper. After reading stories to them about children who have been traumatized, ask them to write the name of a traumatized child living near or far. Then tear the heart in half and write on adhesive tape, "God heals those who are heartbroken and bandages their wounds". Use this tape to piece the heart back together and pray for the children written on these hearts.

# Acknowledgments & Contact

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SPORTS



ARTS



CAMPS



TRAINING



CLUBS



HUMANITARIAN



PRAYER

#### Writing:

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## Vision

We see every child becoming an **ambassador of hope** through Jesus Christ.

## Mission

Grain of Wheat is an international Christian organization. Its mission is to encourage and equip the maximum number of children in need, to develop their potential and help them become **agents of transformation** in their community through the message of God's love.

## Strategy

Grain of Wheat engages with children regularly throughout the year. We partner with local churches to train leaders, hold weekly children's clubs, camps and events. Through this, children grow morally, socially and spiritually through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

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