

# FROM 70 TO 75

2018 - 2023

**“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus”**

**Philippians 2:5**



# Grain of Wheat

INTERNATIONAL

**A five-year plan for the development of Grain of Wheat  
International.**

**Lausanne / Dordrecht, 2018**

**Rob Hondsmerk**

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## Introduction

The writing of this plan felt sometimes a bit awkward like you are deciding about someone else's heritage. Although I tried to be very sensitive to the history I cannot take away the consequences that in some respects, Grain of Wheat needs to change and leave its past behind without forgetting or dishonoring it. Making an organization future proof is not easy and will take a lot of energy, time, resilience and also money. With that in mind I think about what Paul said in Phill.2:5 "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." It is not about us, it is not about our works, it is not about the people that we serve, our successes or failures, it is about Jesus Christ and for His glory that we do our ministry!

That is what I hope to achieve when we enter this new era for Grain of Wheat: that with respect to the past we can create better opportunities to serve the children of this world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and honor Him by what we do!

This report gives tribute to all the workers in the past and gives ideas for the future. I tried to write succinctly and do not have the idea that I am complete in what I write. The plan contains the description of our DNA and a SWOT analysis for the current situation. I also focus on the role of the International Office and staff and what will be needed in the future.

From there I present a new regional model to work with and two different entities: the International Executive Committee and the Strategic Advisory Team. Coaching and training is a topic and of course the financial situation and development of the ministry in the next five years. The final conclusions lead us to the budget and SMART time frame for the next five years. In the appendix a time schedule can be found, as well as a report on our internal and external communication and what needs to be improved in that area.

I hope you enjoy reading it.

Soli Deo Gloria

Rob Hondsmark

Lausanne, March 2018

## 1. History: lessons from the past

When World War II left countless orphans in its wake, a Swiss businessman rose to the challenge. Jean André brought the first group of 120 German children to Switzerland. Half of them were accommodated at Jura-Rosal, one of the original homes, the other half with families in the nearby village. There they were fed, cared for and taught about God's love. Then they returned to their homelands refreshed and better equipped to grow up and become all God wanted them to be. Jean André devoted much of his energy to this work alongside his great responsibilities at the head of the leading grain shipping company in his country. Later on, children from other European countries, France, Greece, Austria, the UK or Spain, were also invited to spend times of restoration in camps in Switzerland.

In 1972 Jean André purchased a park, an hour from the center of Buenos Aires, Argentina, in order to enable local churches to organize youth and children's activities there. Over the years, it has grown into a major center where thousands of people continue to gather for sports competitions, music festivals, and other events.

In the eighties, children from war-torn Lebanon were also invited to Switzerland. Soon after the Iron Curtain fell in 1991, groups of Russian children also started to come to camps in Switzerland.

Connections were established with people in Russia and Lebanon who, like Jean André, had a passion to help disadvantaged children. However, Grain of Wheat then changed its approach and started to organize locally in each country, following training of local Christians. Offices were opened in Beirut and Moscow, furthering the work of Grain of Wheat in the whole Eastern European and Middle-Eastern regions.

The founder appointed his son-of-law, André Richir, director of Grain of Wheat at the beginning of the nineties. In his turn, André Richir handed over the leadership responsibilities for the international organization to the founder's daughter, Anne-Christine André Bataillard. After 15 years at the head of Grain of Wheat International she appointed Jean-Pascal Richir, one of the grandsons of the founder as International President whom was succeeded by Rob Hondsmark from The Netherlands to guide the ministry into a new era.

In 2018, Grain of Wheat will celebrate seventy years of ministry. Nowadays, it is actively nurturing and reaching out to children in 25 nations around the world, about half of them Muslim. From humble beginnings, Grain of Wheat has become a worldwide network and powerful advocate of children's ministry but one thing has remained constant: from Albania to Argentina, from Syria to Kazakhstan, from Russia to South-East Asia, every child counts. Working through long-established relationships with local churches to provide a continuum of ministry as the children grow, the work provides long-term stability to those who are served.

This historical overview that can be found on the ministry's website as well shows a couple of important lessons. Some of them are also recognized in several official documents.

### ***Spiritual***

This ministry is a spiritual ministry and it only exists by the grace of God because He inspired the founder to establish the foundation. This means that all developments need to be Spirit driven instead of money driven. Money is helpful but God is leading. He will never do anything against the principles in His word. So the Bible and the connotations in it are always more important than any cultural or legal development! Which means that all board members and staff do need to know the word of God and need to be committed Christians. There can never be any exception in this. In every important meeting of board or staff the Bible needs to be opened for wisdom and clarity about the glory of God and to seek His direction in whatever topic is addressed. Therefore a time of prayer or devotions (and maybe even fasting) needs to be a daily practice in all offices that we have. The quoted verse from Phil.2:5 continues: *“who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.”* That is a goal and a daily challenge for all who are involved in Grain of Wheat!

### ***Local***

It is a conscious choice to work with local people and the local churches when starting a new branch in another country. We do not send missionaries! Local people do know the culture, they have the networks, know the right people and understand better what is needed. In this situation, the role of the International Office is to serve (and to lead with servant leadership).

### ***Relationships***

Jean André already realized that he never could achieve what he was called to do on his own. That has not changed. Now and in the future GWI will have to build strong relationships and partnerships with other ministries to realize the best possible situations for children and to reach as many children as possible with the gospel. That means that we have to take good care of existing relationships and be constantly aware of new opportunities for partnerships that will increase our opportunities on behalf of children.

### ***Role of the family***

This ministry is a family based ministry as it was started by one man of the family André 70 years ago and since then family members have been very much involved until today. This is the first time that GWI has a non-family member as CEO and he is not from Switzerland. That was a brave (but may be inevitable decision) The role of the family has been very important and we have to acknowledge that. It is part of the heritage of this ministry in which so many family members have been or still are involved. At the same time this involvement can be a danger for the future of the ministry. I don't want to call it a threat but we need to be aware of this fact. The knowledge and support of family members is and will be important but can they keep enough distance to give the ministry the space it needs to change and/or expand?

For the CEO it will be important to maintain good relationships with the family. He has to protect the heritage and use his skills to direct the ministry into a new era and to convince the family that this is the right direction. The full support of the International Board is necessary to achieve this.

## 2. Our DNA: vision, mission and strategy

One of the most important aspects for the survival and renewal of ministries is the understanding of the DNA of the ministry that is implemented in the board and the employees that entered the ministry later than the first group that worked with the founder. GWI has done a good job already by capturing these aspects in documents. However, documents are also a danger if they are kept in the cupboard and are not lived by board and staff.

It would be preferable to have vision, mission and strategy on the website. The latest mission statement was accepted by the International Board in 2007:

“Grain of Wheat is an international Christian organization. Its mission is to reach the maximum number of children with the message of God's love, helping them to grow morally, socially and spiritually through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is done in partnership with local churches.”

In the identity document from 2013 the International Board stated the following aspects:

### 2.1. *We are Christian*

#### **Bible based**

Our ministry is based on the biblical revelation of one God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe in the divine inspiration and the sovereign authority of the Holy Scripture, which is the Word of God.

#### **Sharing the good news**

Our ministry is centered on the belief that salvation is offered through faith in Jesus Christ alone, whilst being sensitive to the contexts in which we serve. At our clubs and camps we aim to have at least half of the children who do not have Christian homes. We aim to bring all children into a personal relationship with God and follow them up so that they can grow in their faith and be discipled.

#### **Care for children**

We address the child as a person who is unique and valued in God's eyes. We have a

holistic approach to the child, caring for their development emotionally and physically as well as spiritually. We seek to protect children from abuse with all our staff and volunteers working under the Grain of Wheat Child Protection Policy.

## ***2.2. We are committed to children***

### **Age group**

Our priority is to reach children from 4 to 14 years old, while ensuring continuing Christian input for children who have become adolescents, by linking them to other organisations and church groups.

### **Type of children**

We work with children from all backgrounds, race and religion while giving special attention to the underprivileged.

### **Family**

We seek to reach the child and his/her family. We recognise that the most important place for a child's care and spiritual development should be the family. We try not to disconnect him/her from his/her immediate environment within the family. We seek to follow up children through home visits and developing relationships with the parents where possible.

### **Child centred activities**

We have developed a range of activities which enable us to provide introductory programmes for children and programmes for sharing the Good News, follow-up and discipleship. These include creative arts activities, neighbourhood and school events, fairs, distribution of aid, camps, clubs, home visits, children's magazines, children's telephone stories and websites. We seek to have a strategic approach to reaching and following-up children.

### **Long term commitment to children**

We use our activities to initiate and accompany children on their spiritual journey through four phases:

1. Having an introduction to Jesus
2. Responding to the message of Good News
3. Growing in maturity
4. Living out their faith and using their gifts

## ***2.3. We are international***

### **International partnership**

Grain of Wheat is an international partnership where each national organization

works within the context of the Covenant of Partnership. The Grain of Wheat ministries in different countries work in relationship with the central organization in Switzerland and with national Directors from other countries.

 **Global strategy**

We keep in mind that we must be part of a global vision and strategy to reach all children. We seek to be actively involved in appropriate regional initiatives and global movements such as KidsGames, the Lausanne Movement and the Global Children's Forum as well as REC, Reaching Europe's Children.

 **Financial accountability**

In our accountability for the resources that God provides through local and international donors we have a policy of transparency and openness which is applied to all aspects of the organization, to finances and to activities. We publish regular reports and consolidated budgets and accounts. We are compliant to the Swiss and US regulations and obligations.

## *2.4. We are national*

 **National leadership**

In order to ensure good local integration of the ministry and a sense of ownership the members of the Board, the Director and co-workers are from the country.

 **National strategy**

We are engaged in a long-term work in each country. We seek to progressively develop a national ministry strategy through the country which implements our activities to help children through the four phases of their spiritual journey, according to the cultural context and the capacity of the country. (see points e. and f. in Section 2) The main part of our work is done in the country where the ministry is based. We aim at a self-supported ministry in the country.

 **Working with churches**

Grain of Wheat is an interdenominational ministry. We seek to work hand in hand with the local church in applying the strategy of Grain of Wheat, being ready to serve the church wherever possible. We aim to integrate children into the local church for discipleship.

 **Training**

To serve the churches and ensure the quality of our activities we emphasize the importance of training and provide training events for children's ministry leaders and

local children's workers.

#### **Partnerships**

We seek to cooperate with other ministries where appropriate, as we are all part of the Body of Christ. Whenever appropriate, we enter into partnership with other Christian organisations where together more can be achieved than on our own.

#### **Excellence**

We strive for quality in all aspects of our ministry - in our training, activities, staff development and administration. We seek to remain innovative and to make the best use of modern technology.

As stated above, documents are also a danger if they are kept in the cupboard and are not lived by board and staff. So, what can we do with these documents? I suggest we develop and implement a philosophy orientation or training.

### ***Philosophy orientation***

The philosophy orientation that needs to be developed has as goal "to help staff and volunteers fulfill their God given assignment and to insure appropriate stewardship of Grain of Wheat resources through the development and administration of policies, procedures and programs."

A philosophy orientation in this way helps the organization to keep the course.

Everyone within the Grain of Wheat family needs to know the Mission Statement, principles that guide our work, our statement of faith and our core values. Also important are guidelines for fundraising.

In this orientation, we should also implement the way we are governed by boards and advisors and the role they play. Therefore not only staff and volunteers should go through this but also board members.

With regards for cultural background and difficult situations for Christians in some countries we should also train people in biblical values like marriage, children as gift from God, abortion, divorce etcetera as long as it has its influence in the way we address children.

To maintain the importance of the orientation it should be repeated every five years or so and have a regular adaptation when developments require so.

## **3. Current situation: SWOT**

Grain of Wheat celebrates this year its 70th anniversary which is a proof of Gods faithfulness and the need for an organization like this. Today the ministry works and is

recognized in about 30 countries all over the world. To manage this “family” requires a well-functioning communication system. This is not the case. Actually, communication is poor though everybody works hard to deliver this job. There are no clear guidelines, there is no sufficient internal and external communication tool. This is what we receive as feedback from different country directors. Before we take a closer look at communication it is wise to present a SWOT analysis of the ministry.

### **3.1 Strengths**



#### **The name and the history of the ministry**

Established in 1948 Grain of Wheat is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. That is a long period of time and a proof that the ministry is well established although it had its difficult years. Branding is a strong element when working in about 30 countries is being done under the same name of the ministry or under a “subname” that is well known in the specific country that chose the name.



#### **Target group: children**

Children are always a good target group in different ways. Fundraising for projects with children is easier than for other groups. Pictures of children in poverty or playing children do work very well. But also, the fact that children have a whole life before them is important. The message of hope and chances is a positive message that people love to support or be part of.



#### **Healthy financial dependency**

The Harvest Foundation creates a healthy financial foundation for the ministry. It is healthy because it is not a limitless financial resource but a well-balanced dependency



#### **Large network**

GWI always wanted to partner with other ministries and organizations which resulted in a large network all over the world. It also creates the opportunity to save money, time and energy when opportunities occur in countries or regions that are new or need more support. Synergy is an important topic within GWI.



#### **Spiritual work**

Although it is not a guaranteed situation, the fact that this is a spiritual ministry creates security. God will never let go the work that He started as long as the workers in the ministry listen and obey to Gods voice and guiding principles. That is the reason that prayer and bible reading need to be part of every day’s life in the ministry.

## 3.2 Weaknesses

### **Weak International Team**

At this moment the international team is too small and has too much to do. It is difficult to change this but because of a couple of difficult years it has to be done.

### **Communication**

The internal and external communication is not up to date. The communication level itself is low and GWI is not using social media or an interactive website. The email newsletter E-blast is only received by nearly 300 people and only 28% opens it when it is received. See the extra paragraph on communication.

### **Distance between GWI office and countries**

Of course I do not mean the geographical distance although this is something too. While working in so many countries and cultures it is obvious that it is very difficult to maintain a common strategy and protect the vision and mission. That is heard from several countries: “what is the direction that GWI wants us to go? Please lead us...” The idea of being a family is almost lost which is a true danger for the ministry as a whole.

### **Fundraising**

This is (one of) the backbone of the ministry in the sense that the ministry is fully depending on donations. If these fail the ministry is in danger. The main donors come from Switzerland but the potential of our contacts in the US is not used at this time.

### **Christian**

Although being a Christian ministry is not a question at all we need to realize that this no longer is an advantage. More and more we live in a post-Christian society. At least in the West where we hope to find our donors. Many foundations exclude religious organizations from support!

### **Huge differences in cultures and languages**

It is wonderful to work in many countries, but the differences create also the danger that strategies or developments will not fit in every culture or that misunderstanding leads to changes nobody wants. So it takes extra effort and energy to make sure everyone is on the right track.

### **No proper use of social media**

GOW has a Facebook page but that is not used strategically or even as a

communication tool. Only Vera is using it for her own purposes. We don't use other social media at the time.

### **3.3 Opportunities**

#### **Addressing new groups**

We have enough opportunities for potential support from groups of people that we didn't address until now. For example the German speaking part of Switzerland or the Spanish population in the US. That might not be easy to do but it is a chance that needs to be considered.

#### **Training**

We have a wonderful group of directors and staff that has a lot of knowledge to be shared. Why not serve other ministries or partner with them to serve the children and those who serve them better? Training is key to raise the standard of quality that we need to offer. So internal training but also external.

#### **New models for fundraising**

We are used to the GOW model for fundraising but also in this area have been many developments in the past years. It has become really booming and professional and we need to make sure we don't miss out. So being trained or hiring a professional might be a very good plan to grow into these new opportunities.

### **3.4 Threats**

#### **Persecution (of Christians)**

We work in many Muslim countries where the persecution of Christians is very common. It is not said that we can continue our ministry in all of these countries in the near future. That means that we have to prepare our teams there and help them develop new ways for ministry.

#### **Decreasing finances**

We cannot expect our donors to continue to sponsor GOW forever. If we do not act pro-active we probably will lose money. Finding new sponsors is necessary.

#### **No involvement of churches**

GOW is there to support the body of Christ. One of our goals is to partner with churches. However, it is difficult to inspire churches (mainly in the West) to embrace the work to, for and with children. If churches do not get connected and start supporting the ministry the danger is, we lose them.

## 4. Role of GWI Office and staff

The ministry started in Switzerland and the International office is still the “oven” where we bake the cake. What does that mean for the ministry and what is the International office doing? What would/should be changed?

### 4.1 Catalyst

The International Office is not the headquarters that tells every country what to do and how to do it. It is not now and will not be in the future. But: many country directors have responded that they need direction and support from the International Office. In that sense the IO can be the catalyst to get things going. That means that the IO needs to know what is going on in the countries to fulfill that role. Countries are used to write their reports, but I would love to see some more strategic content to improve projects and long-term strategy.

### 4.2 Bank, fundraising

The IO is functioning as a bank because it is responsible for the international fundraising for projects in the different countries and the allocation of the money to the countries. This requires a high level of accountability and professionalism to work with all these funds. If this role increases in the future (which is needed and expected) we need more financial knowledge in the IO.

### 4.3 Protector strategies, DNA, history

The IO is the protector of the strategies that were developed through the years and also of the DNA and the history of the ministry. Now that the relationship between the family and the ministry has changed with a new CEO it is even more important that the core values are protected and lived out in the countries. This is what gives GOW its identity. So additions - like some new core values - are possible but the foundation of the ministry needs to remain the same. As written before we need to develop a philosophy training to realize this. In accordance with the idea of training in many topics to improve quality the IO might need a trainer who can develop new curricula and train the country staff.

### 4.4 Director: changes, keep track, etcetera

The new International Director/CEO was hired with the instruction and mission to make the ministry future proof. This requires a lot of understanding of the history of GOW and its intercultural mission before starting to change things. Now with this plan a couple of things have become clear. In the SWOT analysis I already wrote about the challenges regarding fundraising, Christianity and the intercultural differences. Changes we need to make are our goals for the next years as well:

-  better understanding for all directors that they are part of a family

- ✚ change in reporting (adequacy, quality and frequency)
- ✚ working alongside the core values
- ✚ innovation
- ✚ in-country fundraising
- ✚ self-sufficiency within (how many?) years
- ✚ better integration of Christian principles and marketing

These changes will be different from country to country. Some of them are really working hard and doing well, other countries need more support and direction from the International Director / office. The expectation is that if we improve communication we come closer to them and are able to support them better in changes that we require. See the attached time schedule for the expected changes in time.

#### **4.5 Additional role: training, expanding, communicating**

In addition to the banking role and being the protector of the ministry, the IO is also responsible for training, the expansion of the ministry and the communication. Content wise I write about these topics in different paragraphs in this plan but when it comes to the initiation and continuation of these three topics, the IO is leading and directing. This requires an up-to-date information and knowledge and high-level communication skills. When the ministry expands this will be even more important and probably brings up the need for an expert in these areas.

## **5. New organization model**

This year we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the ministry. 70 Years of building, maintaining and growth. But in these 70 years a lot of variables in the ministry have changed. Think about the way of communication, the role of social media and for example the relationships between adults and children or the changing role of the family. Because all these changes do not occur at the same time in all the countries that we work in, we need to cluster our countries and work regionally making our efforts to keep up with all changes as effective as possible.

In this chapter I present a regional working model that I want to implement in GWI. It is based on the principle that we need each other to reach as many children as possible and on the principle that our span of control is limited. Above all it is not only a business model. The guiding of the Holy Spirit stays key and it is for all workers in GOW the absolute number one principle. Every entity described hereunder needs to work along that guiding principle. Business or marketing can never succeed over this!

## 5.1 Regional

This regional model is to be discussed. But I suggest having 4 regions with a regional coordinator each. These four coordinators together with the CEO is the International Executive Committee. They are in an executive position under leadership of the CEO.

Next to this IEC I suggest having an International Strategy Team that consists of the chair of the IB, the chair of the US, the CEO and one or two advisors with specific qualities or knowledge.

**Region 1:** South America and Spain: coordinator Javier

**Region 2:** Albania, France, Madagascar, Reunion Island: coordinator Sylvain

**Region 3:** Middle East, Myanmar: coordinator Ronnie

**Region 4:** Eastern Europe, Russia, stans: coordinator Razvan

### Reporting structure:

The countries report to the Regional Coordinator, who reports to the CEO. The CEO reports to the IB. The meetings of the IEC and IST will be reported to the IB.

### Regional Coordinator:

The Regional Coordinator helps the CEO to decrease his span of control. They have a mandate to act between the lines of the plan and budget that was agreed by the IB. They will report quarterly what is going on in the countries. They assist and advice the countries in strategic planning and in their financial business.

**Goal:** to be organized in 2019 after IEC and IST

## 5.2 International Executive Committee

The IEC earlier existed in the history of GOW. Its existence came to an end because it didn't function as it was meant to be. I do believe in a group of people that have knowledge and skills on the executive level and are willing to share their insights and best practices to bring the ministry to a higher level in quality or outreach. This team knows what happens "on the ground" and what is needed for the countries they represent. It is not a team for strategy or new ideas in the first place. It is a team that makes the work going on and that is improving the quality. This team advises about potential new countries or about the closing of a country for GOW. Their exact job description needs to be written.

**Goal:** to be installed before end 2018

## 5.3 International Strategy Team

This is a new body that I prefer to start. To bind all the aspects of the ministry together it would be preferable to have a body that can advise on strategic decisions that involve

ministry, money and cultural challenges as well as new initiatives. It functions like a think-tank. For that reason, this IST should have the chairs of the board from US and the IB, the chair of Harvest, the CEO and one or two external (international) advisors. Their exact job description needs to be written.

**Goal:** to be installed before end 2018

#### 5.4 Expanding opportunities: reasons (why not)

Although not the first goal we need to consider the fact that “stagnation means decline”. So as soon as we have maintained balance in ministry we need to think about expanding opportunities. Some options are quite close to what we are doing right now. For example, the German speaking part of Switzerland. We already started a taskforce Switzerland with the goal to build a stronger constituency in Switzerland. The German speaking part is part of this plan. From there Germany is not far. A similar development we see in the Middle East where GOW (Ronnie) is involved in other countries than only Lebanon.

Western Europe needs our attention as well, for ministry purpose and for potential donors.

To my opinion we see several reasons for potential expansion: because of a natural development (like in the ME), because of a request from an existing ministry in a country or because of a strategic decision. All potential expansions always need to be implemented in a plan and budget. That prevents the danger of starting something without having considered the pro’s and contra’s for the ministry.

#### 5.5 Closing of a ministry/country

It can happen that it is unavoidable to close the ministry in a country that we are working in. Of course, that is not what we want but we will have to make this decision in the following situations:

-  Abuse of children
-  Continuous budget problems without a chance for change
-  No accountability or proper reporting
-  Unacceptable spiritual directions or lose of the spiritual content of the ministry
-  In-country developments like new laws that make it impossible to work
-  Local leadership that no longer conforms itself to the ministry

The IB will take this decision on advice of the CEO. An official document on this will be written and send to all countries. It will also be a part of new agreements that we sign.

**Goal:** document written and implemented before end 2018.

## 6. Coaching and Training

Coaching and training are often used interchangeably, and that leads to confusion, especially when words like "mentoring" and "counseling" are added to the mix. It's not so much that managers don't know the differences between coaching and training but that so many of their actions imply that they don't.

Just to put us all on the same page, let's make the distinction between coaching and training right up front. Essentially, training is about transferring knowledge while coaching is about enhancing knowledge (or skills)—development, in other words.

Obviously, coaching is a way to *apply* learning in an informed way. Training hopes that learners will remember knowledge, so it can be applied. In the case of sales reps, remembering and being able to apply knowledge will improve performance and productivity.

For these reasons I am planning to do training in the countries offered from the IO. Not only the already mentioned Philosophy training but also other trainings that we can provide or develop. We should think about trainings with content about children but also board and director training which is in many cases neglected but the foundation of the ministry (!). We can make use of the knowledge and trainer skills that we already have in GOW.

A big mistake in training is that it is only done once. Repeated or succeeded training creates a higher level of quality. And every new staff member needs to go through a variety of trainings to maintain the quality level we want.

*"The only problem is that humans don't remember very well. One source says that research shows an average of 50 percent of the information received in a presentation is forgotten within one hour. After 24 hours, on average, 70 percent is gone. And within a week a staggering 90 percent is nowhere to be found.*

*Since the best coaches do so frequently and on an ongoing basis, coaching is one way to impact the fact that even the best of employees will simply not remember valuable information. Training is not enough. So we'll say it again: It's not so much that managers don't know the differences between coaching and training but that so many of their actions imply that they don't.*

*Perhaps no one really thinks or says aloud, "Why should I invest time, effort and money in coaching someone who has already been trained?" But when coaching is nonexistent, haphazard, inadequately funded or rests several rungs from the top of the priority ladder, this might as well be what is said." (meetmaestro.com)*

We have to develop internet training and make use of social media or E-learning.

Coaching is provided through the Regional Model with coordinators who can coach country directors. And of course in country coaching is done (or need to be done) by directors to staff and by staff to volunteers.

**Goals:**

-  philosophy training for all directors by end 2019
-  philosophy training for all staff and volunteers by end 2022

## 7. Financial

### 7.1 Switzerland

The fundraising in Switzerland is vital for GOW and needs to be secured in the first place. So good relationships with donors are important. Next to maintaining, expanding is key. We see several options for this: new foundations, churches, individuals and the German part of Switzerland. To start working on this we begin the "Taskforce Switzerland". It's main goal is *"to create a culture in which donors feel welcome and special, to connect with new potential donors, to visit churches and to explore options in German speaking Switzerland."*

**Goal:** double the support from Switzerland within 5 years.

### 7.2 USA

GOW US has been very weak in the last few years due the lack of leadership. Its opportunities are enormous, but someone has to take the lead and understand the way fundraising is done in the US. My visit to them made it clear they need leadership. So we need to find a leader for/within the board. In the meantime, the CEO will take this role to help the board get to the next level.

**Steps:**

1. Phone call with Shawn and Rebecca (board call): reorganize
2. CEO provides A4 with bullet points from 5-year plan that they can use
3. Approach people to get on board: board members need long term strategy.
4. New meeting for strategy: weekend?
5. May be address Westfall group again

**Goals:**

-  Well-functioning board before the end of 2018
-  Church tour in 2019 and 2021
-  Large donor event in 2020 and 2022 (e.g. concert)

- 🇨🇭 Fieldtrips with Swiss office
- 🇨🇭 Raise at least 1 million US in 2022 for projects

### 7.3 Other opportunities

We need to think “out of the box”. What can we develop to raise more awareness for GWI? We can work with our own resources: newsletter, social media etc. Very important. But we also need to find new ways to inform the Swiss (and others?) about our ministry. Think about selling resources (e.g. books) or offer training to churches or other ministries. It would be a good challenge to grow into the position of “expert in children’s ministry”. What do we have to offer to third parties? This is also important for the US board.

I called the year 2018 the year of INNOVATION. I expect directors to start thinking and act in an innovative way in projects and fundraising. We cannot continue in the same way, we need to find new ways to attract donors to our ministry. During the directors meeting in Barcelona, this will be an important topic.

### 7.4 Budget development

See also attached sheet in the email.

In accordance with the written goals in this plan, the budget shows a development as well in the next 5 years. I would love to see Harvest support this development as it is inevitable that we first need to invest before being able to raise more funds.

To achieve the goals mentioned in this plan we need to hire 3 extra staff. Most important seems to be a communication-expert and a secretary for the CEO. Within two years we need to hire a trainer. The communication expert has to make sure that by his /her work GOW will grow in fame and funding. By this he/she will earn his on salary back and by even doing better it will bring extra donations that we can use for other projects.

**Concrete:** we need to ask Harvest for two years of support for a secretary and a communication-expert.

The developments in the US will be mainly addressed towards fundraising for the countries that we serve. It might be a point of discussion whether we ask the countries for a “fee” to support a communication-expert and a trainer within a few years.

## 8. Time Schedule

For the time schedule, see the separate document send via email.

## 9. Partners in ministry

Because it was realized from the beginning that partnering with other ministries was important, GOW always worked in partnerships. In the last annual reports it is shown how many partners there are. Of course some of them are more important than others but the strategy is clear: do not operate solely if it is possible to work together.

I chose not to write about the different partnerships we have but leave it with the notice that also in the future partnerships will remain very important.

No major changes are needed in the nearby future but GOW will keep its eyes open to see if new opportunities for partnership appear.

## 10. Communication

An analysis is done on our internal and external communication and what needs to be improved in that area. This report can be found in Appendix I.

## 11. Summary and final conclusions

### *11.1 Summary*

This plan is for the next five years and shows the following important things: GOW has a long and rich history of seventy years in which the DNA of the ministry has been established and cultivated. Yet the SWOT analysis shows that to make the ministry future proof it is required to improve several important parts of the ministry.

In the first place the internal and external communication needs to be updated and upgraded. Teams in the countries remark that they don't feel part of an international family and that way we might lose them. We asked a specialist to write a report with an analysis and recommendations which is attached to this plan as a whole and partly integrated in this plan.

Second, I present a new working model with regional coordinators. The countries will report to the regional coordinator who will report to the International Office. This is to limit the span of control. The regional coordinators, together with the CEO will form the new International Executive Committee. They will act only at executive level. We also create a think-tank, the International Strategy Team which consists out of the chairman of the International Board, the chairman of the US Board, the CEO and two independent (international) advisors. They meet a least once a year.

In the third place, GOW needs to pay more attention to training and coaching. Especially the so called Philosophy training is important to implement. This training has to be developed and every director, board member, staff and volunteer has to go through it to understand the DNA of the ministry in its fullest. That makes sure the DNA will also be kept alive in the future.

Fourth the financial development is very important and is stretched in a 5 year budget that is attached to this document.

## ***11.2 Conclusions***

- ✚ 70 years of history is the result of Gods faithfulness and the obedience of the people that He called to fulfill the ministry of GOW
- ✚ Many, many children have benefitted from this wonderful ministry
- ✚ To make the ministry future proof we need to change in organizational aspects and invest in a financial way
- ✚ Harvest foundation will be asked for a one-time extra investment of 116.000 Sfrcs
- ✚ GOW needs to improve its internal and external communication in many ways
- ✚ We need to hire new staff: a bilingual secretary and a communication expert
- ✚ The US ministry of GOW is vital and needs to be directed constantly
- ✚ The US ministry needs to have a result of US 1.000.000 in 2023 for the projects in “our countries”
- ✚ “To give people the idea of being a family, act like a family”

## **Appendix I: Communication**

### **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN GRAIN OF WHEAT INTERNATIONAL 2018**

**Jolein Hondsmerk**

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**Grain of Wheat**  
INTERNATIONAL

## Introduction

This strategic communication plan is written for Grain of Wheat International by Jolein Hondsmark, on request of GWI's CEO R.J. Hondsmark. It is part of a five-year plan for GWI and functions as a guide for improvement in the foundations' (future) communication.

Grain of Wheat International is a foundation that works in over 25 countries worldwide. This international character brings a lot of challenges when it comes to the foundations' structure and the communication flows between GWI and the individual countries. A solid communication strategy is important to guide these different flows of communication. At this moment, GWI does not have such a strategic plan which has resulted in several problems: several countries and their boards have commented they feel disconnected from the bigger 'family' (i.e., the other countries and GWI), the communication to the sponsors and other stakeholders is very minimal which leads to a small dedicated constituency, and several opportunities for internal and external communication are simply not employed, among many other points of improvement. This strategic communication plan will tackle these and related problems and give practical improvements for the future.

In order to write this plan, a detailed analysis of the foundations' current state of communication is performed, which has uncovered the most pressing problems and challenges. Therefore, this plan focusses on four main areas:

- ✚ Identity
- ✚ The communication from GWI to the individual countries
- ✚ The internal communication between the individual countries
- ✚ The external communication to stakeholders

For every area, a description of the current state and way of communication will be given, the problems will be discussed, and several solutions or ideas of improvements will be given.

## Identity

It is firstly considered important to identify how a strong corporate identity can be build, as this is the key to having a strong communication strategy. Therefore this chapter will function as a general remark for the following chapters. Every company, organization, or foundation is defined by its identity. It is the basic profile that an organization wants to project to all its important stakeholder groups (those that can affect or can be affected by the achievements of the organizations objectives) and how it aims to be known by these groups. Thanks to a clear identity, the stakeholders can make connections and associations with the organization. To illustrate, if we think about Apple, we think about innovative technology. So, if stakeholders think of Grain of Wheat, what should be their association? If

you want them to have an association with Grain of Wheat as a stable, large international organization that helps a lot of needy children all over the world, this should be communicated through Grain of Wheat's identity.

An organizations' identity consists of three elements: their behavior, their communication, and their design.

**Behavior: How you walk.** This refers to all the actions and operations that say something about Grain of Wheat. Thus, how there is internally or externally communicated, how employees are treated, etcetera. This also includes the behavior of employees, volunteers, and ambassadors of GWI that leave an impression on the stakeholders of GWI.

**Communication: How you talk.** This refers to the tone of voice in all the planned forms of communication, including brochures, newsletters, events, websites, and social media. This should be consistent.

**Design: How you look.** This refers to Grain of Wheat's style, like their logo, font, colors, symbols, and visuals they use in all their communication (emails, website, newsletters etcetera).

Through these three attributes, Grain of Wheat establishes its identity. All the communication is an outward presentation of this identity. As is it very important to create a positive image of Grain of Wheat among stakeholders, these three elements should be well incorporated with each other and should not be contradicting. Thus, for example the design of Grain of Wheat should be the same across different forms of communication. If organizations have a strong and clear identity, stakeholders know what they can expect from it and what the organization stands for. This will facilitate positive word of mouth about the organization. A strong identity is thus crucial for a strong organization. How can this be further improved for GWI?

### ***Working from the vision and mission statement***

The identity of GWI should emerge from an understanding of their core mission and vision. These represent everything GWI stands for, their basic who and what, and the work they do. Grain of Wheat's vision is: 'We see each child becoming an ambassador of hope through Jesus Christ'. Their mission is: 'Encourage needy children with the message of God's love, develop their potential and equip them to become agents of transformation within their community'. These statements are textual embodiments of GWI's identity and should always be at the core of every action taken, whether the action comes from the CEO, employees, or volunteers. The following chapters will give practical implications for this.

### ***Role for directors***

It is important for the directors of the individual countries to be aware of their identity. They are part of GWI and thus share an overarching identity. Therefore the directors should be made aware that all their actions and communication are a reflection of this shared identity. Everything they produce, organize, or design should be in line with the it. Thus, *how they walk, how they talk, and how they look* should be consistent with how GWI walks, talks, and

looks. The work of the individual countries should be an embodiment of the vision and mission of GWI. This is the responsibility of the directors, but GWI must keep an eye on the developments in these countries and can adjust their course when necessary. This way, it will be very clear what GWI stand for, by which a strong identity can be achieved.

### ***Differentiation Grain of Wheat International and Grain de Blé Suisse***

An important part of an organizations' identity is their name. If stakeholders come across a name of an organization, their brain unconsciously and immediately associates this name with certain characteristics, whether positive or negative. At this moment, the names Grain of Wheat International (GWI) and Grain de Blé are interchangeably used for outward communication from GWI. This leads to confusion among the stakeholders and does not benefit to a clear identity of Grain of Wheat. Therefore, it is important to be consistent about the name of Grain of Wheat. This inconsistency is mostly because GWI head office is located in Switzerland, Lausanne. This French speaking part of Switzerland has more affinity with the France name. However, by using the name Grain de Blé Suisse when referring to or communicating from GWI gives confusion. Grain de Blé should be known as the Swiss department of Grain of Wheat, and GWI should be known as the international, overarching organization.

Thus, it is recommended GWI refers to itself as Grain of Wheat International, or GWI. This applies to all internal and external communication, like emails, newsletters, press releases, and so on. This consistency in the name will help solve the confusion people experience when reading about Grain de Blé or Grain of Wheat International. However, as the name Grain de Blé is already quit well established in Switzerland, communicators can choose to also provide the France name, but only in combination with the English name Grain of Wheat. This should be communicated by the CEO of GWI to all the relevant persons connected with GWI, among which are employees and board members.

As a small side note, GWI is stimulated to think about their symbols that contain the name Grain de Blé, for example on the front door of the head office in Lausanne. It should be considered to change these names to Grain of Wheat International as this is an outward communication to the stakeholders.

### ***Amount of countries***

Grain of Wheat is active in a lot of countries. However, for GWI it is not clear how many countries precisely. On the website it currently states 25 countries, but this is an estimate. Although it can be difficult to get a precise number due to uncertainties involving countries' independency, there should be no inconsistency about this. Therefore it is recommended this is investigated. Even if this number will not be externally communicated, it is important for GWI to know in how many countries they are operating in, in favor of their unity and organization. When the precise amount of countries is established, regional directors can be attributed to them.

### **Action points**

- ✚ The directors of all the countries should be made aware of the importance of having a shared identity and should make sure that their actions are in line with this shared identity. GWI can facilitate this in the following ways:
  - A. The CEO of GWI should stress this in the monthly newsletter to the countries (see below: communication to individual countries).
  - B. GWI should keep an eye on the *walk, talk, and look* developments in the individual countries and adjust their course if necessary.
  - C. The importance of it should be stated on the 2018 international conference for Grain of Wheat' directors in Barcelona.
- ✚ The CEO of GWI should communicate to its employees in Lausanne that the name Grain de Blé should in most cases be substituted with Grain of Wheat International for all external communication.
- ✚ GWI should get a grip on the precise amount of countries.

## **Communication from Grain of Wheat International to the individual countries**

Grain of Wheat has an origin as a family business. Due to the expansion of GWI, this family feeling has faded through the years. GWI has expressed that this structure should be reintroduced, which is also visible in their strategy (2017-2020): *GWI will intentionally model and cultivate a culture of unity and support among its volunteers and leaders, that results in serving children and their families with excellence.* One way to do this is for GWI to act as a *pater familias*: the father and leader of the family for the individual countries. As the leader, it is the role of GWI to guide and encourage the other countries and to inform them about the current (international) challenges, the topic of prayers, and recent developments within Grain of Wheat. This will consequently improve the family feeling and unity of Grain of Wheat's employees. How can this be achieved?

### **Developing a clear communication structure**

Due to a lack of structure within the communication, the individual countries are unaware of the aspirations GWI has on an international level. No clear overarching goal is defined for them and therefore they follow their own course which often leads to a chaotic, incoherent decision making process. This results in countries that work for the same organization, but do not feel connected with it as a whole. This of course does not benefit the family feeling. Therefore, to benefit the unity of Grain of Wheat, a clear direction and goal should be

established by GWI which the individual countries can use as a benchmark for all their actions and decisions. Two things are important here:

- ✚ developing a clear guidance for the longer term using a five year plan
- ✚ developing a structured information flow from GWI to the individual countries.

### ***1. Guidance for the longer term.***

GWI should have a clear idea of their aspirations, their future development, as well as their goals for the (near) future. If this is not clear to them, how can they communicate this to the individual countries? Therefore, a five-year plan is necessary. This five-year plan should contain the broad line of development GWI will go through in the coming years and the practical implications to make this happen. This has two reasons: on the one hand it will give GWI a practical benchmark for their actions and outward communication, and on the other hand it will give clear guidelines to the individual countries, helping them to come up with their own plans. Importantly, within the five-year plan, GWI should think about how it can present itself as a leader of the family for the other countries in practical and spiritual matters, and how this can benefit the other countries' development.

Furthermore, within the five-year plan, specific goals should be developed for the following five years. These goals should be concrete and can be either national or international. A set goal should be very specific, e.g. not stating 'reaching even more children with the good news by hosting more camps', but being specific about the amount of children, which country is invested in, how many new camps etc. A clear link with practice should be established, so that after five years these goals can be reexamined and see whether they were obtained in order to learn from that for the future. GWI should distribute (parts) of the five-year plan to the directors of the individual countries and communicate to them that they are part of the process. Make sure to involve them in order to create a shared future perspective. The content of the five-year plan should be clear to them.

### ***2. Structuring the information flow from GWI***

Besides a better guidance for the individual countries on the long term, GWI could greatly benefit from more communication between the directors, boards, and employees of the countries and GWI. Contact on a regular basis will enhance the unity of GWI. Several communication units can be improved.

#### ***2A. Personal contact between CEO GWI and directors of the countries***

At this moment, the communication flow from GWI to the individual countries is very minimal. Focusing on interpersonal contact, with most countries there is only contact when problems rise, usually in the form of a Skype meeting. This contact should be intensified in order to make the communication more personal, open, and useful. Both GWI and the individual countries will benefit from a more regular contact. This will keep the conversion going, and it will give the countries the opportunity to include GWI in their thoughts of

development, as well as give GWI the option to advise and, when necessary, adjust their course of developments in time. Therefore it is suggested to develop a schema in which the moments of contact are established. Reasoning from 25 countries, four skype meetings per month should be scheduled with the directors of the countries. In this way, every country will have a regular half year contact with someone from GWI (preferably the CEO, but this can also be the vice-president). To structure these skype meetings, GWI can ask every director to deliver a short report of their current developments, their finances, and the questions they would like to discuss in the meeting. It is to be expected that this intensified contact will lead to a better mutual understanding, that it will benefit the family feeling, as well as the unity of GWI. It goes without saying that GWI should also always be open for contact with countries that need more contact than twice a year and vice versa.

## *2B. Regular updates from GWI*

Being the leader for the other countries, it is important to give regular updates of what is happening around GWI. At the present moment, GWI does hardly communicate anything from their side to the countries (see below: E-blast and newsletter are focused on sponsors instead of employees). This almost non-existing and non-structured flow of information does not benefit the image and unity of GWI. The following suggestions are made to improve this information flow.

### 2B-1. Monthly digital newsletter

News from the headquarters is extremely important to keep the employees motivated during their (sometimes very tough) work and involved with the organization as a whole. The easiest way to reach all the countries at ones with regular updates is to send out a monthly digital newsletter. The goal of this newsletter is to motivate, inspire, encourage, and update the employees of the countries about developments in GWI and individual countries. Besides updates, this newsletter is a great way to show GWI's involvement with the countries. The employees<sup>1</sup> have to know that GWI is thinking of them and praying for them. The involvement of GWI with the countries should therefore be central in the newsletter, which will also benefit the mutual involvement of countries. This way, the newsletter is a great way to enhance the family-feeling of GWI.

This newsletter should contain:

-  A short personal word from the CEO of GWI as introduction
-  A section with recent developments of some countries (things that stand out). Each newsletter should represent another country
-  An overview of what GWI is currently working on / looking forward to
-  Prayer topics from the individual countries
-  Prayer topics from GWI

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<sup>1</sup> When referring to employees, all staff is included, thus directors, board, employees, volunteers.

- ✚ A 'fun part', for example a link to a new game that can be used to reach children with the gospel
- ✚ A link to the internal platform (explained further below)

### *Formatting the newsletter*

The newsletter should be visually appealing, using well-chosen topics, subheadings, including pictures, and using the right symbols (see above: 'Identity'). Such a visually appealing newsletter has a higher chance to actually be read. Several free or low-cost programs are available that make it an easy job to create such an appealing newsletter. Two suggestions are MailChimp ([www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)) and MailerLite ([www.mailerlite.com](http://www.mailerlite.com)). MailChimp is an internationally well-known newsletter software that is easy in use. It is free to use to the limit of 2000 subscribers. If the newsletter is sent to more than 2000 people, it costs 31,70 euro per month. MailChimp gives a statistical overview per newsletter, e.g. how many people opened the newsletter and clicked on links. An advantage of the paid version is that newsletters can be created and stored until they need to be sent. A second option is MailerLite, a more advanced software than MailChimp. It is free to use to a limit of 1000 subscribers, thus less than MailChimp. However, from 2001 subscribers on, it costs 18 euros, thus cheaper than MailChimp.

### **2B-2. Be creative: make a vlog!**

A popular way of communication these days is via vlogs; an abbreviation of "videoblog". Using video instead of written words to update the employees can be a very fun as well as time-saving way of communicating. A vlog is always fun to watch, thus reaches a lot of people (usually more than a plain newsletter). It will also be a nice variety from the usual newsletter, and most importantly: it will give the employees a good inside into the current issues and persons of GWI. This will strengthen their commitment with GWI. So, what can be addressed in such vlogs? Think about a personal message of thanks from the CEO, an introduction of GWI staff members that countries have regular contact with, an impression of a recent visited project, a word of encouragement, a special message for Christmas/new year, an interview with a local director, etcetera. A vlog does not have to be produced every month, but every other month would be a nice frequency. It can be sent as part of the newsletter.<sup>2</sup> It is a challenge to be personal in vlogs.

### *2C. Personal touch*

As a result of the intensified contact with the countries, it is to be expected that the employees of GWI will gain a good inside into the personal developments of the countries' board and/or directors. It would be good if GWI would express their interest, sympathize, and affect to them. On a very minimal level, a Christmas letter could be sent to all the boards and directors. Also, sending a personal email every once in a while will probably be very appreciated. On a higher level, GWI could send a card or gift if personal circumstances

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<sup>2</sup> If the videos do not contain any private information, e.g., a videoclip of a dance children perform, it might be convenient to use this video for the website as well.

apply. These seemingly small gestures will enhance the contact of GWI with the other countries as well as the family feeling.

### ***Action points***

- ✚ Develop a five-year plan and distribute (parts of) it to the national directors.
- ✚ Structure the information flow:
  - A. Personal contact. Develop a schema for regular half year contact with all the directors of the individual countries.
  - B. Regular updates. Develop and send out a monthly digital newsletter and start making vlogs.
  - C. Personal touch. Enhance the personal contact by sending personal emails and being thoughtful of personal circumstances.

## **Internal communication between the individual countries**

The individual countries have expressed their concern about being unaware of the developments in other countries. This part of the internal communication is very essential to improve. It is important for the individual countries to have knowledge of the current developments of other countries so that they can learn from each other, use each other's knowledge, and be mutually involved. This flow of communication is completely absent at the moment. In order to facilitate this communication, an internal online platform should be created.

### **1. Online internal platform ([gowplatform.com](http://gowplatform.com))**

#### ***Goal of the platform***

The internal platform (currently in the making) will have the overarching goal to connect the individual countries. It is a way of centralizing information, facilitating engagement with each other, and making it easier to interchange information. Also, all the information that is shared will be automatically stored, making the information easily accessible for everyone. This platform will ultimately lead to more contact between countries.

#### ***Benefit for GWI***

This platform is of great benefit for GWI. When properly used, this platform will lead to a structured overview of the communication with and between the employees and GWI. More importantly, it will provide the staff of GWI with constant new input like stories and photos

that can be used for external communication. This has often been a point of struggle in the past, when countries did not provide this material in time or at all (see further ‘rules’).

### *Characteristics of the platform*

A few things are very important in order for the platform to work. The platform should be easy to use; the menu should be straightforward and easy to navigate. Furthermore, the platform should have a good structure, so that information can be quickly and easily found. It is also important that the connection is fast enough so that it does not take too long to open another part of the website. Considering the fact that a lot of pictures will be used, this should be taken into account.

### *Access*

This will be a private platform, only accessible for people involved with Grain of Wheat in any way. The general public will not have access to this platform, as all the information they need will be on the website. Login codes for all the Grain of Wheat members are therefore needed. Within the website, differences will be made between peoples’ accessibility; not everybody can access every layer of the platform. For example, ambassadors will need to have access to the study materials (PowerPoints etcetera), but do not need to get access to the personal profiles. It is important that the GWI staff has access to all parts of the platform.

<b>Who</b>	<b>Access to which parts:</b>
Staff of GWI	Everything
Staff of individual countries	Everything
Ambassadors	Contacts, promotion materials, testimonies, calendar.
Volunteers	Contacts, promotion materials, testimonies, calendar.
General public	Nothing

### *Heading of the platform*

The following headings are suggested to be part of the platform, in the following order.

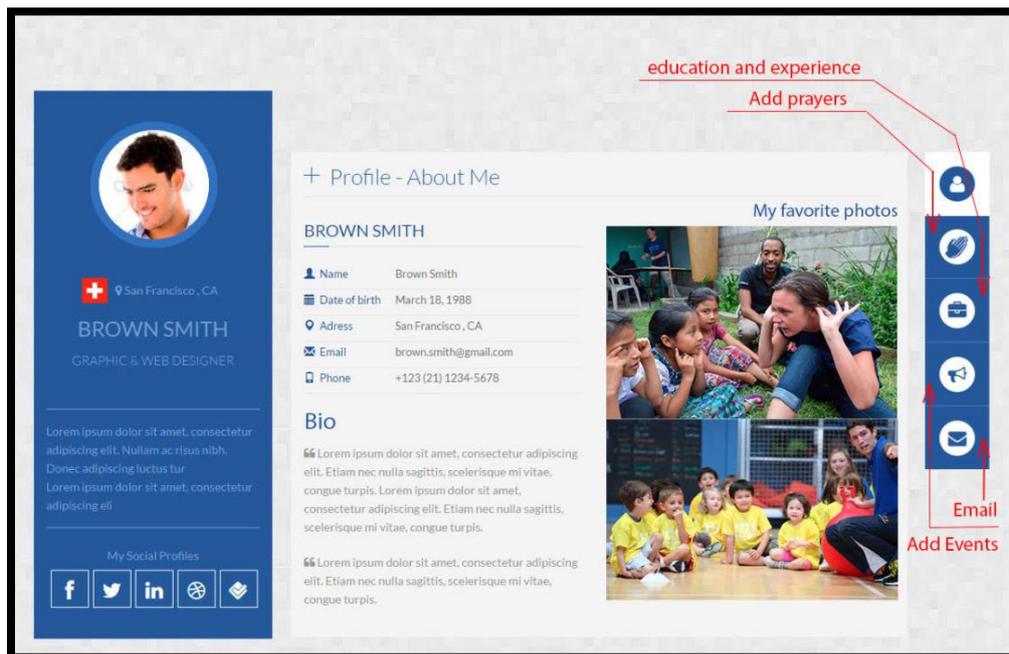
-  **Home.** This is the homepage of the platform. Here people will see what has changed since their last visit; either links to updates from other workers, new study material, new topics on the forum, new events on the calendar, etcetera. Also, this page can be used by GWI to make a general announcement (e.g., reference to the new newsletter), to upload a new vlog, or to stress something rather important. It should be noted that uploads from GWI will be visible on the home page, while only a link to the part of the website is shown if other users update something.
-  **Forum.** This part will be used for open interpersonal contact. All users that have access to the forum will be able to start a topic. This can be to ask advice about

something, or to share a best practice. In either case, people from different countries can advise each other and learn from each other. Examples of fora topics are: testimonies, practical links, new sports/arts to help explain the gospel, questions about diverse topics etcetera.

- ✚ **Prayers.** In this part users can share their topics of prayer, and people can respond to them. This will benefit the mutual involvement.
- ✚ **Personal pages and contacting.** Every user of the platform will have a personal page. Here the general information of the person can be found, as well as their contact details. Also, people can upload personal or general information that they would like to share with the other users.<sup>3</sup> Because of these personal pages, it will be very easy to contact each other. Via this page, a personal message can be send.
- ✚ **Promotion materials.** This part of the platform will contain the promotion material and general information of Grain of Wheat that can be used for external communication. This is the place for standardized PowerPoints (useful to ambassadors), annual reports, promotional videos, flyers, an online version of the hardcopy newsletter produced for the constituency, etcetera.
- ✚ **Calendar.** All the activities that will take place, either from GWI or the individual countries, will be shown in an orderly manner by using the calendar. All the prime users of the platform can add their activities to this calendar, visible for the employees. It should be decided by the directors what kind of activities should be on the calendar, for example the ones they also request prayer for. A link to Google Agenda could be useful.
- ✚ **Administration.** This part of the platform will be used to deliver new material to GWI. A format should be developed, in which the users can upload the required information; at the minimum new stories and photos. A pre-existing format will make it easy to deliver this information, resulting in more frequent updates. The key for this part to work is thus the perceived ease of use.

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<sup>3</sup> For an example of the personal pages made by Karen Kazarian, see below.



Example of a personal profile page, developed by Karen Kazarian.

### Rules

A platform like this needs rules. People need to actively use this platform, so that the goal stated above can be obtained.

#### Do's:

- First of all, it is important that someone will be the 'leader/owner' of the platform to make sure it is still on track when used. This can be the technical developer, or a communication expert.<sup>4</sup>
- Second, it is advised to make a 'regular update rule'. Every country should be obligated to give an monthly update via the platform (using the part 'Administration'). Practically, this means uploading new photos and stories of children or staff members. If every country has this monthly obligation, the platform will be time reducing for the GWI staff as they will have enough material for the newsletters and other external communication.
- Thirdly, it would be good if members of the platform are encouraged to place regular updates concerning their personal pages, topics of prayer, fora, and the calendar. This will keep the platform vivid and useful. It should be decided who will have the task to manage these regular updates; some countries may need to be reminded in the beginning. Will this be the task of the 'leader/owner' of the platform, or of GWI? GWI does have insight into countries' issues like accessibility of internet, which might be needed to take into account.

#### Don'ts:

- Keeping the structure in this platform is very important. It is not supposed to become a dump place of information. It is the responsibility of the person who uploads something that

<sup>4</sup> Further in this document it will be advised to hire a communication expert as part of GWI's staff.

it is in the benefit of the platform, thus useful or interesting to the other members, and shared in the right section of the platform. The leader of the platform should approach a member if he/she uploaded something that is in the wrong section or does not benefit the structure and content of the platform.

### *Implementing*

In order for this platform to work, everybody has to actively take part in it. This will take some effort in the beginning to get to know the platform. People should be motivated by GWI to get to know the platform, start using it, and give a monthly update. Also, the directors of the countries have the responsibility to encourage their staff to use the platform. A good way to motivate the members is by emphasizing the benefits for them, for example the easy way of contacting people via the personal pages, and the easy way to upload their monthly updates. Also, it should be stressed that those monthly updates are needed for the fundraising and contact with the sponsors. Lastly, being part of this platform is great fun! Emphasize that.

## **2. Conference calls**

Besides the online platform, the internal communication could be facilitated with video conference calls. This will give the directors of the countries an easy way to keep in touch with each other and to discuss important matters. This is also useful for contact between the regional directors. If possible, this can be implemented into the platform. Otherwise, there are free options available (like Skype) or professional low-cost options (like GoToMeeting, available for 19 euros per month).

## **3. Existing internal Facebook page**

Currently, a Facebook page is used for the internal communication. However, this page is barely used and has become more like a spam page than a useful contact page. The internal platform will solve this issue, and therefore the Facebook page is no longer needed.

### *Action points*

To improve the internal communication between the countries, GWI is advised to:

-  Invest in an internal online platform
-  Stress the importance of the use of this platform among their staff
-  Investigate the added value of conference calls with the directors

# External communication of Grain of Wheat International

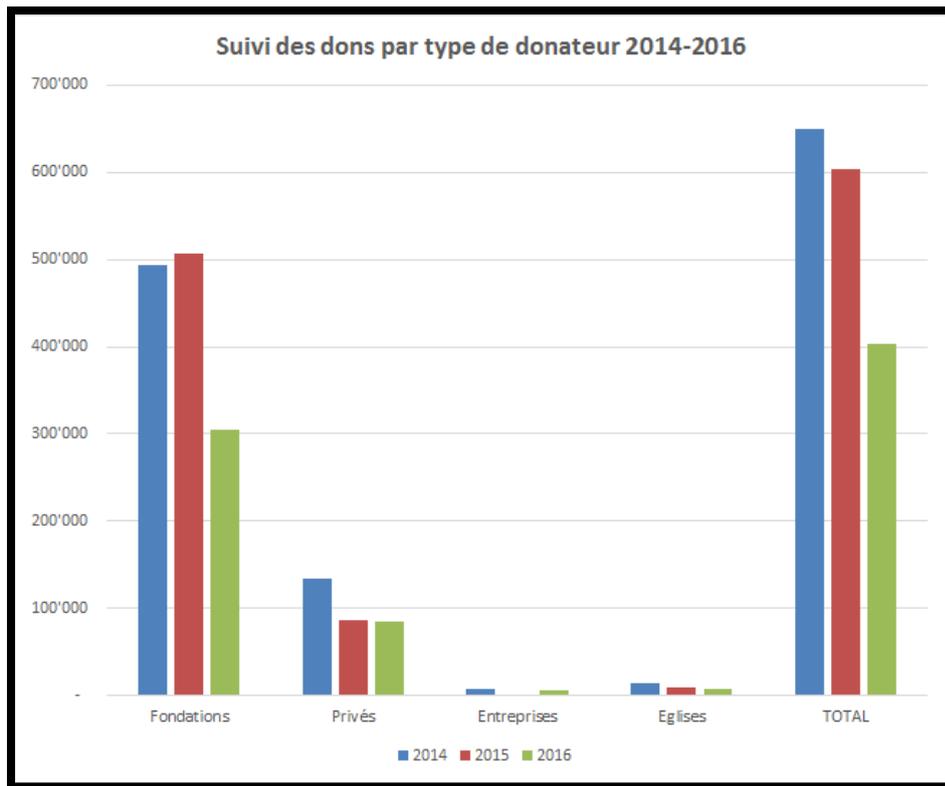
In order for Grain of Wheat to continue to grow, external communication is of the essence. External communication is defined as any communicative effort that is specifically focused on people or organizations outside Grain of Wheat. It is focused on spreading news and information about Grain of Wheat. The ultimate goal of external communication is for people **to feel connected** to GWI and the countries they operate in, to become or continue **to be involved** with GWI, and **to enlarge** the amount of small and big sponsors. Two problems exist:

- ✚ GWI has a rather small dedicated constituency
- ✚ GWI has limited external communication: they use a website, a monthly E-blast, a four monthly hardcopy newsletter, an annual report, and a minimal presence on social media.

## Target groups

Before practical implications can be made to improve the external communication, the target groups for the communication should be defined. As GWI want to be known as a Christian organization, it is obvious that most of their external communication is mostly directed at Christian individuals, Christian organizations, and churches. However, GWI could also benefit from communication to a more general public. The communication to them could be a bit more moderate, still acting from a Christian standpoint, but making it less prominent in order not to scare people away. This is for example the case for press releases. Thus, the target groups for the external communication consists of:

- ✚ The current constituency: the people and organizations currently interested in the work of GWI. It is a challenge to keep them involved.
- ✚ The people that used to work for GWI, but have left in the past years. As they know GWI, they could be easily targeted. It should be tried to get these people to be involved with GWI again, for example in the role of ambassador (see below).
- ✚ People that donated to GWI in the past. They were convinced of the benefit GWI's work once. GWI should be brought into their attention again.
- ✚ Groups unaware of the existence of GWI. This group can be divided into:
  - 4A. Christian individuals and churches. As the analysis of donors shows, these groups are underrepresented in the total of donors. Especially the churches' involvement can be improved a lot. They should be targeted, for example by using ambassadors.
  - 4B. Non-religious people / the general public (among which are enterprises). This group is harder to reach than the other groups. They can be approached via less personal external communication, like social media, press releases etcetera.



*Numbers for the amount of donors in the period 2014 – 2016. This figure clearly shows that the amount of donations are declining in three years. Communication with the public is of vital essence for donations.*

### **How will external communication help to enlarge the constituency?**

Through external communication, GWI will inform their target groups about their developments and show their activity. By constantly reminding the target groups about GWI, 'top of mind awareness' will be created. This is a form of brand awareness which is about the recall of the brand (in this case: name). If top of mind awareness is achieved among potential followers, chances are high that they think of GWI as the first organization if they think about organizations that help children. The key for top of mind awareness is repetition. If people come across the name of GWI once, they will store it in their short-term memory. But if people came across the name more often, they will store it in their long-term memory, which will enhance their recall of GWI. Thus, if people read or hear more often about GWI, it will become their top of mind 'brand'. When making decisions about donations or other ways of involvement with an organization helping children, they will first think about GWI instead of other comparable organizations like Compassion. External communication is thus of the essence to constantly remind people of GWI and to enlarge the constituency.

### **What exactly should be shared?**

As showed above, in order for people to get involved with GWI, they should know about the organization and their work. However, just spreading facts is not enough. The external communication should exist of a combination of facts and, more importantly, concrete stories and testimonies 'from the field'. In the outward communication, the impact of GWI's

work on the life of children should be showed. Personal stories are a powerful way of touching peoples' heart, which will hopefully lead to a higher level of involvement. This combination of facts and stories is already well-executed in the newsletter, so this is a good example.

Furthermore, in every external communication form that people can across, there must be a reference as to how people can get involved with GWI. If the reader is touched and wants to take action, GWI should provide options for that. Therefore all communication should have a minimum of contact details (website, telephone number, address, way of donating). If this is lacking, an opportunity of someone getting involved could be lost. However, it should not be too obviously present (e.g., keep mentioning the donation possibility) as this will become annoying.

## Forms of external communication

This section will address the different forms of external communications for GWI: the E-blast, hardcopy newsletter, annual report, presence on the web, contact with sponsors, and contact with volunteers and ambassadors.

### 1. E-blast

At the present moment, GWI sends out a monthly E-blast that is produced by a volunteer. This E-blast is send to all the sponsors. It is recommended to keep this E-blast as it is a powerful way of informing sponsors with concrete news and regular updates, keeping the sponsors involved with GWI. Several points are strong about the existing E-blasts: they have intriguing titles, vivid pictures, and inspiring and motivating texts. However, the figures show that only a small part of the receivers actually open the E-blast. As the E-blast is the most direct way of contact GWI has with the constituency, it needs to be good, appealing, and structured. Therefore, it is in need of renewal.

#### **Goal**

At the present moment the goal of the E-blast is not clear. It is a combination of encouraging people's faith, an update of GWI, and a call for donations. The goal should be clear so that people know what to expect from the E-blast, leading to a higher amount of readers. For the improved E-blast, the goal should be to inform the receivers about recent developments in GWI and/or the individual countries, with the ultimate goal to get them to donate money for GWI. It can thus be seen as a newsletter with a goal to action.

#### **Format**

The format of the E-blast needs to be changed. At the present moment the E-blast is not visually appealing. The font is hard to read, and the information is not structured. A structured and visually appealing E-blast is vital, as it will invite receivers to read the information and makes it easy to them. As has been stressed in the part about identity, all outward communication should be in line with the identity of GWI. In this case, *how you look*, is extremely important. The present E-blast looks outdated, which people will attribute

to their image of GWI. Also, the E-blast is not in line with the symbols, font, and colors of GWI. The importance of this has been stressed before. It should be made sure that future E-blasts are in line with GWI's identity.

In order to facilitate a structured and visually appealing E-blast, it is recommended to use an online program to shape it. MailChimp is recommended (see details in 2B-1).

### ***Frequency***

As explained above, a frequently reminder of GWI will help to become top of mind. Therefore, the frequency of once a month should be maintained.

### ***Content of the E-blast***

The content of the E-blast should be carefully considered, as it is an important mode of contact with the constituency. It is comparable to the content of the monthly newsletter send to the employees, but will sometimes be less personal and more global. Importantly, the E-blast should not become too long. The following parts can be part of the E-blast:

- ✚ **Introduction by GWI's CEO.** The CEO of GWI is the face of the organization. If people think about GWI, it is most likely they think about the CEO. Therefore, a form of 'personal' contact is important. This can achieved by a short personal word, in which the CEO for example thanks them for their involvement or shares some developments in GWI. For time reducing reasons, it is possible to use the personal message produced from the newsletter to the employees for this (see above).
- ✚ **Updates GWI developments.** The E-blast should give an overview of the developments of last month in GWI. For example, if a conference has taken place, a small report of the results could be given.
- ✚ **Updates from countries.** To show that GWI is actively involved with all the countries, every E-blast should address some recent developments of a few countries. It would also be nice if interviews with local directors are included.
- ✚ **Testimonies.** To make the E-blast a way of letting people feel engaged with GWI, personal testimonies should be shared. Touching peoples heart will lead to a higher involvement. These stories are provided by the countries with the use of the platform. The testimonies could also be in the form of blogs, for which a link to website could be implemented.
- ✚ **Appealing pictures.** To illustrate the stories, pictures should be part of the E-blast.
- ✚ **Prayers.** A small part of the E-blast can be devoted to prayer topics.
- ✚ **Statistics.** People like to see what happens with their donated money. Therefore it would be good to show them results based on donations. For example stating that x euros is needed to give a child the opportunity to attend a camp.
- ✚ **Action.** The goal of the E-blast is to get people to act in the form of donating. It should be very easy to donate. A link to the donate part of the website is sufficient.

- ✚ **Contact details.** The contact details of GWI should be provided. In the present E-blasts, the contact details of the American division are shown. This is confusing, as GWI is located in Lausanne. This should be changed.

### **Receivers**

The E-blasts are presently send to the sponsors. However, as this is the most direct form of contacting the people involved with GWI, the E-blast should be send to the whole constituency. This includes sponsors, volunteers, ambassadors, and people that are interested in the work of GWI and want to be updated about their developments and achievements. The E-blast should be send to everyone that is a potential sponsor.

### **Language**

At this moment, the E-blasts are dispersed in English. Ideally, the E-blast should also be available in France.

## **2. Hardcopy newsletter**

At the present moment, GWI sends out a small booklet to all its sponsors. This newsletter is visually appealing and well-structured. It is also in line with the design part (*how you look*) of the identity of GWI. It is produced four times a year, which is considered to be a good frequency. However, it is rather expensive to produce and disperse these booklets. Therefore, their content can be optimized. Presently, their biggest part are the testimonies of children and camp leaders. To make the content more varied, the following parts can be considered as addition to the newsletter:

- ✚ Introducing the teams of the countries
- ✚ Calendar with activities and events
- ✚ Prayer calendar with topics from all the countries
- ✚ Statistics of how many children were reached, how many camps and clubs were held etcetera
- ✚ Vacancies

This newsletter should be dispersed to all the people that are part of GWI's constituency.

## **3. Annual reports**

Every year, an annual report is produced and dispersed among GWI's constituency. These reports are well-structured, visually appealing, and have a good content. They do not have to change too much. The suggested additions mentioned above for the hardcopy newsletter also apply here.

## 4. Presence on the Web

People in need of information of GWI will use the internet as a first source. Therefore, it is extremely important to be a) present on the web and b) to present updated information of GWI. Presence on the web takes two forms: the website of GWI and their social media.

### 4A. Website

Grain of Wheat International's website is the first contact to the people who are visiting. It is therefore important to have a good looking, modern, and working website that has paid attention to its details. The present website of GWI can be enhanced. It is not visually appealing, looks a bit outdated, is not in line with the design of the organization, and it has a lot of layers that easily make the visitor feel lost in the information.

It is recommended to build a new, professional website. This should be done by a company that has experience with building appealing websites. This will cost some money, but the benefits for GWI will outweigh the costs. The website should portray GWI as a professional, large organization that is well-structured and that is worth becoming involved with. A better website will benefit the image people form of GWI. A few characteristics are particularly important for the new website. These are stated below.

#### *Accurate and up-to-date information*

The present website contains a lot of information, but most of it is not up-to-date. For example, the history of GWI is very interesting to read, but it states that Jean-Pascal Richir is the CEO of GWI, which is currently not the case anymore. Other examples: when clicking on a country, contact details are missing, the directors are not introduced, the progress of 2015 or 2016 is shown (instead of 2017 or 2018) etcetera. In short, the website is not a good first impression of GWI. With the new website, this should be enhanced. There should be one person who regularly checks the information on the website to see whether it is up to date, and change it if necessary.

#### *Donations*

- The part of the website where people can make a donation to the work of GWI should look trustworthy and it should be very simple to donate. At the moment, the donation part is not attractive and very confusing. It is not clear which link and address people should use. It is to be expected that a lot of people who want to donate money via the website do not understand how it works, or are discouraged by the non-professional interface of this part of the website. This should be enhanced in the future website. It should be easy to donate via ideal.
- Also transparency is very important. People want to know what happens with their money. This makes the website more reliable. The future website should take this into account. It could for example show some statistics what GWI can do with the donated money: "for x dollars, a child can go to camp". This way people can visualize the impact their donation has.
- It should be made possible to donate for a particular country or project.

- There should be a contact person for people who have questions about their donation. Preferable, this is someone at GWI's head office.

### ***Features of the website***

The renewed website could contain the following parts. For all these parts, it is extremely important that they are **regularly updated**. Outdated information gives the visitor the feeling that the organization is passive and not currently working on things.

- ✚ **Homepage.** This page is almost the most important part of the website. It should give the visitor an immediate idea of what GWI is. It should explain what they stand for, how they work, and what their mission and vision are. Visitors should be provided with a link to a part of the website where this is more elaborately explained.
- ✚ **Introducing staff members of GWI.**
- ✚ **Countries.** Ideally, for every country it should be explained how GWI makes a difference there.
- ✚ **Testimonies.** These are well presented on the current website.
- ✚ **History** of the organization.
- ✚ **Blogs.** It would be nice if employees, volunteers, or ambassadors would share their experiences in the form of blogs. These blogs can be shared on social media by visitors of the website, making the website interactive.
- ✚ **Media.** Here visitors can find promotional videos of GWI, press releases, and links to GWI's social media.
- ✚ **News and actualities.** Here visitors can find the annual reports, important announcements (like the 70 year celebration of GWI), and other actualities.
- ✚ **Contact page.**
- ✚ **FAQ.**
- ✚ **Get involved.** Here visitors need to be provided with the information about how they can become involved with GWI as a volunteer or ambassador.
- ✚ **Donate.**

### ***Illustrations***

Below two examples from the Dutch website of Compassion are given. Their website is a good example of a well-structured and clear website. The first picture is from their homepage. They clearly state there how they work and it is immediately understood. The second picture shows their statistics in an orderly and attractive manner. This kind of portraying of information is also possible for the website of GWI. On their homepage they can for example use this format to make it clear how they work: through childrens evangelism, children camps, follow up clubs, and training.



### Mobile version of the website

It should be noted that the website should have a mobile version as well, as the web version does not always have a proper format and good usability for the mobile phone.

### 4B. Social media

GWI is present on several social media, but none of those accounts are actively used. This is a shame, as social media is a free and rather easy way of keeping people informed about the developments of GWI and of gaining their loyalty to GWI. Social media will be very helpful in reaching a bigger constituency. Improving GWI's social media accounts will thus result in a larger constituency, among which are volunteers, ambassadors, and sponsors.

### Presently in use

At the moment, GWI has several social media accounts. This includes:

-  **Facebook.** Name of page: Grain of Wheat International. 199 likes and 197 followers. This is the official Facebook page for GWI. The last post was in April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Two options are possible for this account:
  - Delete it and start a new account that will be kept up to date.
  - Improve the already existing page. A benefit of this is that the followers can be kept. A disadvantage is that the page will show a gap between the last time they were used and the present.

-  **Facebook pages from the countries.** Several countries have up to date Facebook pages for their own country and activities. This is good, as long as the pages make clear that they are part of a bigger organization. Therefore the name of the pages should always use their country in it, thus: Grain of Wheat \*France, etcetera. Under 'info' they can refer to GWI. Specifically the Swiss part of GWI has a confusing name: Fondation Le Grain de Blé. They should be urged to change this name to a more general name as described above.
-  **LinkedIn.** A LinkedIn page exists for GWI. It only has 5 followers and zero content. It does refer to the website of GWI. This is a very bad page and should be deleted. However, having a proper LinkedIn page in the future would be good.
-  **YouTube channel.** GWI has a YouTube channel, but this is not an active channel. It has four followers and only two videos.

### ***Social media possibilities***

Besides Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube, several other social media platforms could be used. These include Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+, Tumblr, and Reddit.

### ***What to share?***

In order to reach a large group of people through the social media accounts, the shared information should be interesting for (possible) followers. The things that are shared can be testimonies, blogs from the website, new promotional videos, vlogs from the GWI office, general updates, etcetera. Also think about the options to call for donations for a specific project. Everything that is shared should be interesting and engaging.

Thus, GWI can enhance its presence on social media. Their accounts should be kept up to date and interesting to followers. Importantly, every content that is shared should be in line with GWI's identity.

## **5. Promotional videos**

Promotional videos are important for an organization to have. At this moment, GWI has one promotional video online on YouTube (see: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKH\\_cceCHUI&t=119s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKH_cceCHUI&t=119s)), both in English and France. This video is interesting, shows the work of GWI around the globe, and is professionally produced. However, it only has 30 views, the information in it is outdated (names and functions of employees have changed) and this video is too long. Therefore, a new promotional video should be developed, which gives a clear overview of the current status of GWI and the work they do. A promotional video should be short and concrete: 3 minutes is the maximum. The promotional video can be distributed via YouTube and other social media accounts. Also, it should be present on the website.

## **6. Contact with the constituency**

The constituency of an organization is of major importance for their continued existence.

Therefore it is important to not only have indirect contact with them via E-blasts, newsletters, and presence on the web, but to also have personal contact with them every ones in a while.

### ***Sponsors***

Contact with sponsors is important. GWI currently personally thanks the people that make a big donation. This is very good and should be continued. However, it would also be good to thank the people that give a smaller donation, or that give a specific amount every month. This can be organized in the form of a thank you letter that is send to all the sponsors every three months.

### ***Volunteers***

GWI has a lot of volunteers all around the world. They do a lot of good work and should be thanked for that, as well as motivated to keep being involved with GWI. Personal contact with GWI is therefore necessary. This could be in the form of a thank you letter or vlog, a small gift, or an organized day specially for the volunteers. Thanking the volunteers could take two forms:

-  GWI could produce the letters/vlogs of thanks and distribute them to the directors of the country. They should then redirect these to their volunteers.
-  The responsibility of the contact with volunteers could be given to the local directors.

### ***Ambassadors***

It would be good if GWI would start using ambassadors. Ambassadors are people that are enthusiastic about the work GWI does and want to share this with their network. This is a great way to get more local churches involved with the work of GWI. Ambassadors could make their own church familiar with GWI which could perhaps lead to involvement and/or donations of the church.

If ambassadors are becoming part of the external communication of GWI, they should have access to some materials they can use to talk about GWI. This can be promotional videos, standard PowerPoints with information, flyers, etcetera. At this moment, several hundred small booklets are available for ambassadors to share. These booklets are developed by Anne-Christine ("From the hearts of children") and are available in English and France. These are good examples of materials the ambassadors could disperse. These kind of materials should be produced and placed on the internal platform. Ambassadors should be given excess to the relevant parts of the internal platform.

Besides this, information about becoming a volunteer or ambassador should be available on the website of GWI.

## **7. Database**

At the moment, GWI does not have a database with all the contact details of their constituency. As the external communication is targeted at them, this is important to develop. Without a database, people cannot be targeted. It would be a shame if the

newsletter cannot reach an involved person because its contact details are not known to GWI. Therefore, a database should be developed with the personal details of everyone in the constituency. This could take a few months.

## Action points

To improve the external communication of GWI, it is advised to:

- ✚ Reshape the E-blast
- ✚ Make minor changes to the hardcopy newsletter and annual reports
- ✚ Hire a technological developer to produce a new, professional website
- ✚ Increase its presence on social media
- ✚ Develop a new promotional video
- ✚ Increase contact with the constituency
- ✚ Develop a database with the contact details of the constituency

## Conclusions and implementations

Through this strategic communication plan I have analyzed the current situation of GWI. It became clear that GWI can enhance its communication in several ways. First, I have focused on the importance of a shared identity among the different countries. An identity is formed by three aspects: *how you walk*, *how you talk*, and *how you look*. It was concluded that all the directors have the responsibility to make their communication in line with the overarching identity of GWI.

Secondly, I analyzed the internal communication from GWI to the individual countries. This is an almost non-existing flow of communication at the moment. It was discussed that communication flow can be enhanced in two ways. One, by developing a clear guidance for the countries on the longer term using a five year plan. Two, by developing a structured information flow from GWI to the individual countries. This will take the form of personal contact with the directors, regular updates from GWI by using newsletters and vlogs, and using a personal touch.

Next, the internal communication between the countries was taken into account. Again, this communication flow does almost not exist. The major advice of this chapter is to implement an internal platform for the employees on which they can contact each other. This will benefit the mutual engagement of the countries. Also it was advised to start using conference calls with multiple directors.

Lastly, the external communication of GWI was analyzed. Concrete suggestions are made to improve the external communication, focusing on the E-blast, the hardcopy newsletter and annual reports, the website, social media, promotional videos, and contact with the constituency. Specific details and action points can be found at every chapter.

## Implementation

The suggested changes will affect the communication of GWI in a great deal. However, the changes cannot be implemented all at ones. In order to shape the process, it is recommended to hire a communication expert as part of the GWI team. This communication expert should help to use the internal and external communication in such a way that it will positively represent and benefit GWI. On the basis of this report, the communication expert will be in charge of:

- ✚ Developing a schema for the personal contact between the CEO of GWI and the directors of the countries
- ✚ Producing the monthly digital newsletter from GWI to the employees
- ✚ Steering the use of the internal platform and guiding the users. Making sure people use the platform actively and in a proper way
- ✚ Producing the E-blast, or help the present volunteer to enhance the E-blast with suggestions made in this report
- ✚ Produce the hardcopy newsletter and annual reports
- ✚ Increase GWI's presence on the web by keeping the website and its' social media accounts up to date and relevant
- ✚ Developing a database with the contact details of the constituency

I hope this report will give Grain of Wheat International a solid guideline to improve the several flows of communication over the coming years. I am looking forward at the future developments of Grain of Wheat International and wish the organization God's blessings.

# Appendix II: Time schedule SMART

# Appendix III: Budget 2018 - 2023