



# CWRD UPDATE

THE COVENANT WORLD RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2025



Esperance, like Amani (back page), receives psychosocial support from AGIR-RDC.

## Holistic Transformation

TRANSFORMING INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

Covenant World Relief and Development has long held as a core value a commitment to holistic transformation. Through global partnerships, we aim to serve the whole person—mind, body, and spirit—and entire communities.

In a world marked by wars, natural disasters, and widespread abuse, the Covenant Church instinctively responds to both the spiritual and physical needs of our global neighbors. I am deeply grateful for the leadership of our partners around the globe, who increasingly prioritize the psychosocial and emotional well-being of those experiencing trauma.

**In this update, you will read stories that demonstrate both the need for and the impact of including emotional care as part of a holistic response to all types of crises.**

It is my hope that we can learn from our global partners and grow in our understanding of holistic response in times of crisis.



NILS CLAUSEN, DIRECTOR

### TRAUMA CARE & MENTAL HEALTH ARE CONNECTED

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that globally **one out of every four people will be impacted by mental illness** at some point in their lives.



Globally, **about 30% of women aged 15 and older have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner** at some point in their lives, causing significant and often generational trauma.



An estimated 3.9% of the global population has experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at some stage in their lives. Studies indicate that common mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD, are **more prevalent among those exposed to violence, conflict, or displacement, compared to host populations.**

Emotional and psychosocial support refers to the assistance provided to individuals in order to help them manage their emotional well-being and cope with social challenges.

The transformative work of many of our partners includes a commitment to comprehensive trauma care and support initiatives. Approaches vary depending on the setting and context of each of our partners.



Your gifts help extend this crucial care to those who need it most.

Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.

3 JOHN 1:2 (NRSV)



## Partner Perspectives

Trauma comes in many forms. According to the WHO, 22% of people affected by disasters and conflicts require psychosocial support. **In 2024, we launched a Partner Perspectives webinar series that focuses on partners worldwide who are experiencing the impacts of disasters on their lives and communities.** Scan the QR code to watch recordings of the series.



### Medical Teams International

UKRAINE PARTNER

In the midst of the ongoing war in Ukraine and Russia, Medical Teams International (MTI) has been delivering essential trauma care and psychosocial support to displaced individuals and refugees. Oleg, a 61-year-old man from Lysychansk, Ukraine, lost his son and

two close friends to the war. Soon after, a stroke took his leg, and he and his wife were evacuated to a shelter. Overwhelmed by grief and loss, Oleg felt hopeless. **When MTI's mental health staff arrived, they offered him counseling and regular visits, and Oleg began to find a renewed sense of purpose.** Simple activities like crafting and tea times helped him reconnect with life. "I needed someone to listen and support me," he says. Now Oleg has hope and is planning for a prosthesis and happier future. MTI's presence has been a lifeline, providing not just psychological support, but also hope and resilience.



### FACE/SUMAK

ECUADOR PARTNER

The SUMAK Comprehensive Care Center for Women Victims and Survivors of Violence is dedicated to improving the lives of women affected by gender violence in Ecuador. Originally from Carchi, Marisol\* moved to Cayambe for work to support her family, eventually saving enough to open her own business. However, her partner repeatedly betrayed her, stole her savings, and left her in financial ruin. After their last violent confrontation, Marisol

knew she had to break the cycle for her children's safety.

Through SUMAK, Marisol found the support she needed. At SUMAK, she is learning coping strategies and has rekindled her faith as a source of strength. **Now, balancing work in a factory and her business dreams, she is focused on creating a better future for her children.**

With SUMAK's guidance, Marisol is finding hope amid hardship.

### AGIR-RDC

DR CONGO PARTNER

AGIR-RDC's psychosocial support initiatives are transforming lives for displaced individuals in the Democratic Republic of Congo, including women like Amani.\* **Amani, who now lives in the Don Bosco displacement camp, joined AGIR-RDC's support group after hearing about it through her local church.** Through this group, she found space to manage the emotional challenges of displacement, stress, and strained family relationships. "I came because I felt I needed help with my thoughts," she said. Amani initially sought guidance from AGIR-RDC's counselor, later joining group sessions where she learned

strategies to manage her emotions.

The teachings have been life-changing. Amani said, "Very often my husband and I would argue. In the group, I learned to manage my emotions and lower my voice. This, I think, saved my home." Through AGIR-RDC, Amani has found resilience and healing even as she continues to face financial struggles, common among displaced women. She and her peers save modestly through a group fund, but she dreams of income-generating opportunities to regain independence. Amani is grateful for AGIR-RDC's support and empowerment.

\*NAMES CHANGED

