Originally from Burundi, Angelique is a smart, determined woman, who dreamed becoming a doctor. She loved school, and earned a college degree in public health and French. Angelique lived with brother, and young son, Jean who she doted on. They had a happy life, with a lot to look forward to. But the promising future that lay ahead of her took a sudden detour when her brother witnessed the murder of a high-ranking government official. Instead of spending her time with Jean and her bold career aspirations, Angelique, Jean, and her brother had no choice but to flee Burundi because they were at risk of being tortured or killed because of what her brother witnessed.

They made it to Kenya, but Angelique’s nightmare was not over. Far from it, in fact, when her brother mysteriously disappeared one day. They only explanation she could think of was that the government of Burundi captured him and took him back. Refusing to believe that he was dead, Angelique and Jean returned to Burundi to find him. But her pursuit was cut short when a group of men looking for her brother found her instead. They physically and sexually assaulted her. Afraid now for her own life, she was forced to take Jean and flee back to Kenya, this time, though, she was pregnant from the attack.

Finding herself alone in Kenya, now with two children to support, the trauma Angelique endured was paralyzing. The only work she could manage was selling mandazi, a doughnut-like pastry, on the street in Nairobi’s central business district. Even if she was physically and mentally able to work in a hospital, Angelique didn’t have time to pack the certificates that proved her education and experience as a health professional. And without these, there is no way that she’d get a job in a hospital like she once dreamed of.

Angelique made a friend who also sold mandazi, and it didn’t take long for her friend to see how much Angelique was struggling. Her friend recommended the Center for Victims of Torture. After all she’d been through, Angelique was reluctant to trust strangers, but decided to see if CVT could help her. Through working with CVT’s caring staff, Angelique rediscovered the strength to carry on that was always within her. Although she still struggles to pay rent and provide for her children, her beaming smile comes more easily now, especially when she talks about all the new skills she has learned, like braiding hair and cultivating an entrepreneurial spirit. She is once again dreaming dreams she thought were gone forever.

This year, CVT will help nearly 30,000 survivors and family members, like Angelique, dream again. To offer healing, capacity development, and advocacy on such a large scale each year, it will take $26 million dollars.