



Annual Report

April 1st 2017 to March 31st 2018

Introduction

This annual report is prepared for the 5th Annual General Meeting of GRAN to be held on June 5th 2018 at 3:30pm at the Church of St John the Evangelist in Ottawa.

The overall mission of GRAN, which is to advocate in meaningful and strategic ways for the human rights of grandmothers, vulnerable children and youth in sub-Saharan Africa, remains unchanged. Our advocacy efforts continue to focus on three key issues: – access to affordable medicines, ending violence against women and girls and ensuring quality education for all. An important event this year was a fact-finding trip a group of GRANs made to Uganda. There they had the opportunity to hear first-hand from the Ugandan grandmothers about their advocacy priorities.

We were pleased with the announcement in June of Canada's first feminist international assistance policy which has gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as one of its areas for action. We are hoping that more resources will be forthcoming from the government so that this policy can be transformed into meaningful action.

Our Advocacy Campaigns

Education GRANs all across the country worked hard this year to raise awareness of the importance of universal, quality education and to encourage the Canadian government to contribute its fair share to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The replenishment conference was held in Senegal in early February. GRANs wrote letters, sent Christmas cards, signed postcards, phoned their MPs, and used social media to get their message across. Events were organized and presentations made. All this work was successful, as Canada announced in January that it had doubled its commitment to the GPE to \$180 million over three years (2018 to 2020). This, accompanied by increased commitment from other donor countries and from developing countries themselves, will mean



Ketty Nivyabandi speaking at the Day of the African Child event held in Ottawa in June.

many more children will receive an education and have the opportunity to break out of the cycle of poverty.



Valerie Wright (left) and Diane Woods (right), members of the Education Working Group, meet with Julia Gillard (centre) the chair of the GPE.



A Farmers Market event in Saskatoon brought the issue of GPE funding to the general public

The Orange Campaign



Golden Horseshoe GRANs, Ontario



Science World, Vancouver

This is the 4th year that GRAN has participated in the United Nations' campaign marking **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**. This campaign again galvanized GRANs all across the country to get involved – many buildings were lit up in orange, mayors and MPs made proclamations in legislative buildings, rallies were organized and GRANs everywhere dug out their orange clothing, picked up their placards and marched! If you look in the

gallery tab on our website, you will get an idea of the extent of the activities. Each year we have more communities involved and a bigger turnout at our events.

We are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of partnerships as we combine with other groups in our local communities to organise rallies, arrange speakers, light up our buildings and dress ourselves in orange. Violence against women and girls is found in all countries and in all economic and social groups. Working together with others only strengthens our voice.



GRANs meet with the Mayor of Ottawa

Access to Medicines

1) GRANs wrote letters and emailed their MPs to encourage their support for MP Raj Saini's motion M-132. This motion states that the Standing Committee on Health be instructed to undertake a study on ways of increasing benefits to the public resulting from federally funded health research with the goals of lowering drug costs and increasing access to medicines, both in Canada and globally. This motion has been passed in the House of Commons and forwarded to the Standing Committee on Health for further study. GRAN will be presenting a brief to this committee in the near future.

2) We continue to monitor the consultations taking place regarding trade agreements such as NAFTA and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). We will raise our concerns about any provisions that negatively affect access to medicines.

Hill Team

The Hill Team, a group of GRANs based in the Ottawa/Gatineau Region, has gone through a period of reflection this year, as it found the focus of its work changing. Individual meetings with MPs and their staff have become more difficult to arrange, while at the same time, the government as a whole is more open to consultations and dialogue with civil society organizations. Therefore, the Hill team will put increasing emphasis on building and strengthening relationships with like-minded civil society organizations and participating in consultations and dialogues with government officials and parliamentarians. The Hill Team will continue to act as a resource for Working Groups and the Leadership Team on how best to engage with individual MPs, Ministers and officials when appropriate, providing advice on parliamentary strategies and background on key players and government directions. The Hill Team is also planning the Hill event with parliamentarians and GRAN members which will take place during Hello Friends.

Trip to Uganda January 2018



The grandmothers of Jinja, dressed in all their finery, waiting to speak to us

GRAN's mandate is to advocate for the human rights of grandmothers and children in sub-Saharan Africa, but one aspect of our work that has been missing up to now is direct contact with the grandmothers we are trying to help. This trip is the first step in remedying that. Ten GRAN members and one spouse travelled to Uganda in January for a 2-week stay organized by GIVE International. The first part of the trip was spent visiting various projects supported by GIVE. These visits gave us a really good opportunity to see the conditions in which grandmothers live and gave us a wonderful opportunity to meet and interact with the warm and welcoming Ugandan people. We

visited rural villages, orphanages, homes for street children and disabled children. We also visited schools and spoke with the school administrators and teachers and had the opportunity of participating in a mobile health clinic. The highlight of the trip was our meeting with close to 200 grandmothers who had travelled some distance to meet us. We felt so privileged to be able to talk with them and hear their stories. There was a lot of pain in listening to their experiences and hearing about their health issues, but we were impressed with their resilience and how hard they work to improve conditions for themselves and their grandchildren.



A smaller group of us spent a few days in Kampala and met with advocacy groups that are working on similar issues to ours. We met with “Uganda Reach the Aged Association”, “HelpAge International”, “Joy for Children Uganda” and “The National Association of Women’s Organizations”. We were greeted warmly by all the people we met and were impressed with the advocacy work that is being done by these agencies. We certainly intend to maintain and build on these initial contacts we have made.

We are already planning a similar trip for February 2019.

Reports and Policies

Older Women Report

This research was undertaken and the final report written by a dedicated group of GRAN members last year. We are pleased to say that summary sheets of the 5 key pillars of action: (1) education and lifelong learning, (2) health, (3) freedom from violence, (4) economic security and social protection, (5) human rights, dignity and full participation, are available on our website under the “Campaigns” tab. The full report will be available soon.

This important report may well form the framework for GRAN's future direction.

Climate Change Report

A report on the effects of climate change on sub-Saharan Africa and its implications for the work of GRAN was developed by a small group of Ottawa GRANs. It is also available on our website under “About GRAN” (Click on “Useful Documents”) This is a topic which we will certainly be revisiting in the future

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). A policy on SRHR has been developed by GRAN .This policy clarifies the range of rights and health services included in GRAN’s support of SRHR. This policy is also available under “Useful Documents” on the GRAN website.

Partnerships

Our most active partnership this year has been with the **Africa Canada Forum (ACF)** which is one of three regional groups of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC). CCIC is a coalition of Canadian voluntary sector organizations working globally to achieve sustainable human development. We have collaborated on letters to the government and participated in dialogues they have set up with Global Affairs Canada. We also attended their 2-day annual conference.

We have also partnered with the **Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD)** and were successful in having a blog submission accepted into the Huffington Post.

We have worked in collaboration with the **Canadian International Education Policy Working Group (CIEPWG)** as we developed the GPE advocacy campaign.

We continue to partner with **Girls not Brides**, a global partnership which now includes 800 civil society organizations from over 90 countries, as they work on eliminating early, child and forced marriage. This issue is closely linked with ensuring that every child goes to school and has access to a good education.

We have ongoing contacts with **Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)** with whom we are discussing the feasibility of collaborating on a TB campaign in 2018.

Communication

External -- Website: Our website continues to be our most important external communication tool. It is kept up to date by our very able team of website volunteers. We really appreciate the work that the team does behind the scenes to maintain the site. In particular we are grateful to our website technician, Daniel Hegarty, who generously gives his time to keep the GRAN website operating smoothly. This year we undertook a review of our current website and what it is and is not able to provide in terms of support for our advocacy initiatives. We have dreams of making advocacy actions more streamlined via our website, as well as having ways to automatically track actions taken. This will involve a software upgrade to the website that will require an investment of dollars, so we are very grateful that these funds are available thanks to the generosity of GRANs during our 2018 fundraising campaign.

GRAN Emails: We continue to send out email messages to all GRAN members a few times each month. These messages arrive in your inbox as the latest “GRAN News” on our advocacy issues or are calls to take “GRAN Action”. This method of communication has been very successful as it enables us to contact our supporters quickly and directly.

Social Media: We use Social Media, primarily Twitter and Facebook, as an important advocacy tool for our campaigns, amplifying our messages and also supporting the campaigns of our partners.

Internal -- Update: Our monthly newsletter, the *GRAN Update*, is our internal communication tool which is sent out to all our members. It contains news on the work of the three GRAN working groups, related advocacy work, stories from GRAN members all over the country, and information relevant to our mandate.

Translation: GRAN continues to try to translate as many resources as possible into French. We are so grateful for our small team of volunteer translators who translate template letters and backgrounders into French for our advocacy campaigns. This year they have also been working on our Older Women Count documents so that they too will be available in both official languages.

Growing the Grassroots

We responded to the need to grow our grassroots by designating October as “Grassroots recruitment month” when we encouraged members to reach out to new people in their communities. We put forward a few ideas and many people took them up. Different events, which were organized across the country, were very successful. We realize that there is nothing as important as personal contact in recruitment of new members. We also acknowledge that this is an ongoing challenge, especially in some areas of the country where GRAN members can feel quite isolated and alone.

Aeroplan

November was our Aeroplan campaign month and we are pleased to report that a total of 115,277 miles were donated. Thank you! This will help GRAN members attend national and international conferences, help GRAN groups bring in speakers for special events, and facilitate the annual face-to-face meeting of GRAN’s Leadership Team.

Fundraising

February was again designated as our fundraising month and we raised \$ 5521 from our members which shows the enthusiasm of our members for our work. This support is greatly appreciated. Efforts to secure funding from outside sources have proved difficult as we are not a charitable organization and cannot issue tax receipts, but we will not give up on this initiative and will continue to look for outside funding. This year we launched “Donations as Gifts”, a new fundraising initiative through our website giving our members, families and friends the means to make donations in memory of someone or in celebration of a special occasion.

Regional Meetings

Because our biennial Hello Friends was postponed to 2018, in 2017 we encouraged regions to organize their own events and two very successful gatherings took place:

1) Southeastern Ontario

In April a one-day regional GRAN conference was held in Brighton organized by Sharon Graham and Joyce Nicholson. About 40 people attended from many different communities in Ontario. Janet Siddall opened the conference with an overview of GRAN and the Older Women Report. All three of GRAN’s focus areas were discussed and participants left energized with a new commitment to the work of GRAN.



Sharon Graham in Brighton

2) Vancouver

In September, Greater Van GRAN hosted a regional gathering with approximately 30 people attending from Victoria, Vancouver and the Sunshine coast. Janet Siddall and Colleen Stefanich spoke on the Orange campaign, Peggy Edwards spoke on “Older Women Count” and Phyllis Webster did a presentation on the barriers to education for girls in sub-Saharan Africa. The event was a great success, new friendships were made and energy renewed.



A fun time at the Vancouver Regional meeting

Hello Friends 2018

We are really excited as the time for our “Hello Friends” gathering approaches. The theme this time will be:

Reflect, Renew, Rejoice.

Recognizing older Women’s rights as Human rights

The gathering will be from June 4th to 7th at the Church of St John, the Evangelist in downtown Ottawa. Samantha Nutt from War Child will be our keynote speaker on Monday night and Kitty Nivyabandi from Burundi will speak at our closing banquet. We are also planning a visit to Question Period on Wednesday afternoon followed by a meeting with MPs on the Hill where we will present our unique perspective on older women. We plan to celebrate our partners at the closing banquet.

Five years will have passed since we set our advocacy goals and directions at Hello Friends 2013, a perfect time for review, reflection and renewal. So, as we listen to speakers, participate in workshops and interact with one another, we will have the future direction of GRAN foremost on our minds. Be prepared for considerable discussion on this.

Appendix

Leadership Team

Hilary Elliott (Ottawa, ON), Heather Fraser (Vancouver, BC) co-chairs; Jenny Neal (Saskatoon, SK), Ruth Buckinger (Sackville, NB), Janet Siddall (Whitehorse, YT), Irene Clarke - treasurer (Oakville, ON) Pat Dolan (Gatineau, QC) Pauline Barrett (Vancouver, BC).

Recording secretaries: Sue McKenna and Linda Kulkarni

Access to Medicines Working Group

Angela Quinlan (co-chair)
 Bunny Keeley (co-chair)
 Marilyn Coolen
 JoAnn Mulhern
 Pat Dolan
 Ginger Shaw
 Sue McKenna
 Jenny Cervinskas
 Mary Spoke
 Irene Clarke (LT liaison)

Ending Violence against Women Working Group

Janet Siddall (co-chair and LT liaison)
 Lynne Kent
 Colleen Stefanich
 Heather Fraser
 Myrtle Blinn
 Ann Rycroft
 Barb Rother

Education Working Group

Valerie Wright (co-chair)
 Ann Frost (co-chair)
 Roz Johns
 Phyllis Webster
 Diane Woods
 Sharon Swanson
 Jenny Neal (LT liaison)

Regional Leaders:**British Columbia**

Pauline Barrett
 JoAnn Mulhern
 Gail Boylan
 Sharon Swanson
 Rita Taenzer
 Alberta
 Ann Rycroft

Prairies

Jenny Neal

Atlantic

Sue McKenna
 Marilyn Coolen

Regional Leaders continued:**Ontario**

Valerie Wright
 Annie Creighton
 Linda Kulkarni
 Gaye-Francis Alexander
 Irene Clarke
 Joyce Nicholson
 Sharon Graham
 Dana Bachman

Quebec

Suzanne Defresne
 Pamela Walden-Landry

Hill Team

Pat Dolan
 Bonnie Johnson
 Bunny Keeley
 Janet Wilkinson
 Hilary Elliott
 Myrtle Blinn

Website Team

Pat Evans
 Marilyn Coolen
 Ruth Buckinger
 Annie Creighton
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