



## **GRAN FIVE-YEAR REVIEW**

**2013-2018**

### **Vibrant National Advocacy Organization**

Five years have come and gone since GRAN held its first Hello Friends conference in June 2013. During that time the Millennial Development Goals (MDGs) transformed into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Conservative Harper years were replaced with the Liberal Trudeau years, and GRAN supported calls to action both on the global stage and at home. Together we have celebrated many milestones and weathered many challenges, bringing us to where we stand today – a vibrant national advocacy organization that has made a difference on a number of fronts.



*GRANs meet Ugandan Advocacy Organizations*

An ongoing challenge for GRAN has been to expand our network of relationships with individuals and organizations in sub-Saharan Africa. In January 2018 we undertook our first trip to Africa, to Uganda, where ten GRANs met with grandmothers and advocacy organizations over a two-week period. They learned much that will help us move forward with our next strategic plan. A second trip is planned for 2019.

### **Three Advocacy Issues**

Perhaps the most significant development five years ago was the transition from our focus on access to medicines to the inclusion of education and ending violence against women as issues of importance to grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa. The expansion of our advocacy priorities enabled us to bring the needs of African grandmothers to conversations with new advocacy partners and to gain a better understanding of how all these issues are interdependent. At the same time, having three issues presented challenges, as occasionally there were competing interests that required priorities to be set. Unchanging during this period were our values of social justice and human rights and our criteria for selecting advocacy issues and campaigns.

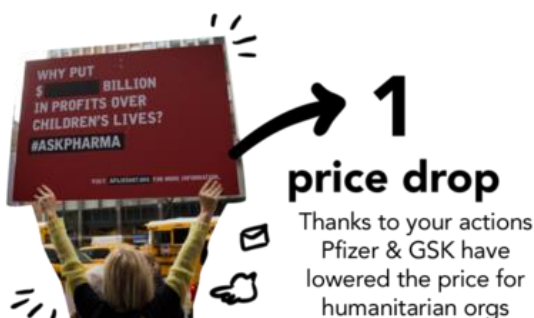
These criteria are:

- ***The issue is of vital importance to the well-being of African grandmothers in their task of caring for their AIDS-orphaned grandchildren.***
- ***There are opportunities for collaboration with other credible NGOs at the international, national and/or local level.***
- ***There are signs that it is a politically opportune time to pursue a particular advocacy point and have an impact.***
- ***We have access to expertise necessary for credible and effective advocacy.***
- ***We have the capacity to provide resources to members in our network so that they can take action.***

## Working Groups

### Access to Medicines

Our advocacy on access to medicines over the past five years has focused on three main activities: We continued our support for the Global Fund and then celebrated Canada's increased pledge at its Replenishment Conference held in Montreal in September 2016. We worked to bring attention to the intellectual property rights provisions in trade agreements (specifically, TPP, CETA and NAFTA) that would compromise access to medicines. To this end, we presented a brief to the Standing Committee on Trade. Finally, an exciting new partnership was established with Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), as we participated in *A Fair Shot*, MSF's campaign to reduce the costs of pneumococcal vaccines for children. We used social media, especially Twitter, very effectively and added 3,614 names to the MSF petition to get pharmaceutical companies to reduce the cost of the pneumonia vaccine. This very successful campaign was a great way to involve the grassroots and the community at large in this important issue.



### Education



On education, GRAN has spent the last four years working tirelessly in support of the Global Partnership for Education and has twice celebrated Canada's increase of its investment in the GPE at two Replenishment Conferences. GRANs did a full-court press with a sustained effort to advocate for the importance of investments in education. There were letters and

phone calls to the PM and parliamentarians, meetings with Ministers and officials, Twitter storms and Letters to the Editor. In so doing, this Working Group has built the credibility of

GRAN as knowledgeable and passionate spokespersons on this issue. Keeping girls in school is often cited by African grandmothers as their top concern and we know that school attendance is critical to ending child marriage and reducing poverty. Our work on this issue led to another new relationship - our membership in the Canadian International Education Policy Working Group (CIEPWG). Also, in 2016 GRAN sent a letter to the Canadian government, encouraging it to sign on to the “Safe Schools Declaration” which is an international political commitment to protect students, teachers and schools from attack in times of armed conflict and to prevent schools from being used for military purposes. We were very pleased when Canada became the 57<sup>th</sup> country to sign on to this agreement.

## Ending Violence Against Women

The Working Group on ending violence against women and girls began by focusing on two issues: violence in mining settings and child marriage. The mining issue became a campaign about conflict minerals focused on supporting Bill C-486, the Conflict Minerals Act. Although the bill was not passed, the campaign was very successful in raising awareness about the use of conflict minerals, particularly in electronic devices. The focus on child marriage led to the development of a policy paper on Child Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) and the initiation of a new partnership with the global organization Girls Not Brides. Our work in ending violence against women and girls also led us to a new partnership with the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada.



*Orange Campaign Event*

The UN campaign to stop violence against women and girls, known as the Orange Campaign, occurs each year and GRAN has participated every year since 2014. From tweets to vigils to panels to marches to lighting up buildings, we have brought awareness of this issue to Canadian cities and towns across the country. We have all added orange scarves and sweaters to our wardrobes and the photo gallery on the website is testament to the creativity and dedication of GRANs across the country.

## Hill Team

The Hill Team has had a transformative five years, moving from meeting with Ministers in the Conservative government, such as John Baird, to meeting under the Liberals with Global Affairs Canada, through collaboration with other CSOs such as the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD) and the Africa-Canada Forum. Although the Hill Team continues to meet occasionally with MPs and Parliamentary Secretaries, more of its time is now spent with partner and coalition meetings with Global Affairs Canada and parliamentary associations and committees. The Team also provides advice on parliamentary strategy to the Working Groups.



*On Parliament Hill*

## Organization and Communications

Organizationally, we incorporated as a not-for-profit and crafted a governance document and by-laws that have served us well, giving us legitimacy in the eyes of national government departments and international and civil society organizations.

Now a recognized organization, we needed to upgrade our website, the public face of GRAN, and did so in 2015, funded through generous donations from GRAN members.

Our website continues to be our most important external communication tool. It is kept up to date by our very able volunteer website team. In the fall of 2016, we started a new way of communicating with GRANs across the country through our website's communications program. GRAN email messages now arrive directly in the in-boxes of GRAN subscribers on our mailing list. The "GRAN Action" messages encourage a particular advocacy action, such as signing a petition, making a phone call, or sending a letter. We also use these direct messages to share "GRAN News", with links to current articles and in-depth info about our issues. Direct messaging allows us to contact our supporters quickly with timely information and actions that can be done easily and instantly. We are in the early planning stages of a further major upgrade to our website, which will focus on improvements that will increase our advocacy capacity and effectiveness.

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 working groups, advocacy news, stories from around the world and educational pieces.

## Membership

Over the five years, our membership has grown from 175 in 2014 to 675 members in 2018. While this growth is encouraging, we know we need to continue to support and "grow the grassroots" by attracting new members and by ensuring our campaigns provide information, motivation, and tools to support action by existing members. Our outreach to francophones remains a challenge for us. However, we are helped by the generosity of our volunteer translators and a few key Montreal GRAN members.

## Funding

GRAN manages to accomplish a great deal while operating on a shoestring budget. As a volunteer organization, GRAN relies entirely on donations to fund our ongoing work and campaigns. Fortunately, our fundraising and Aeroplan drives have been very successful over the years due to the great generosity of our members. Over this time period we have raised \$32,344.00 and 537,364 Aeroplan miles. In 2017 we introduced the option of making tribute donations to GRAN, in celebration or in memory of someone special. We hope that these "gifts in lieu" will become a popular option for our members when thinking of giving (and receiving) gifts. Fundraising beyond our member base remains a challenge for two reasons: we do not have charitable status (which makes giving to GRAN less attractive to individual donors); and foundations and governments are generally looking for specific projects to fund and are less likely to support advocacy work.

## Regional Activities

There were some very successful regional initiatives which have given GRAN a strong presence in areas such as Northumberland in Ontario and Vancouver Island and the lower mainland in British Columbia.

There were regional gatherings, African films, speakers, and other activities which were above and beyond specific advocacy campaigns, but which brought GRANs together in the cause for African grandmothers. The vibrant Ottawa Regional group meets quarterly to share and educate and is central to organizing all the logistics surrounding the Hello Friends event.



*GRAN Conference  
Brighton, Ontario*

## Policy Papers & Strategic Direction

In 2016 a team of GRANs developed a research paper titled “Older Women Count!” detailing the ways in which older women in sub-Saharan Africa are invisible, overlooked and uncouncted. The paper is structured around five pillars: education, health, freedom from violence, economic security, and human rights. This document will help to inform how GRAN moves forward beyond 2018.

As a result of global and national changes such as the replacement of the MDGs with the SDGs, the more urgent focus on climate change, the 2015 election of a Liberal government in Canada, and other world events, GRAN’s strategy has needed to adapt. We did so in 2016 with “GRAN’s Advocacy in a Changing World, Changing Canada” where we aligned our advocacy with the new SDGs.

More recently, an excellent paper was prepared on climate change in sub-Saharan Africa and the implications for GRAN’s issues. It will help us integrate messaging about climate change into our advocacy materials. Another recent development was the drafting of a policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights which was approved by the Steering Committee this year.

In 2018, we will launch our new Strategic Plan and mark our fifth anniversary. What the future holds is uncertain, but GRAN will continue to advance social justice and human rights for grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa. Looking forward, our advocacy may well be very different from the past five years.

To paraphrase Heraclitus: “No woman steps in the same river twice, for it is not the same river, and she is not the same woman.” The global environment will continue to change, and GRAN will continue to grow.

*GRAN Leadership Team*

*May 2018*

## **Appendix**

### **We Have Grown and Made a Difference!**

#### **2013**

46 GRANs meet in Ottawa to assess the focus of our future advocacy efforts

GRAN produces its first brochure using the branding generously provided by Banfield Seguin and the printing and translation provided by the Ontario Public Services Employees Union

GRAN is selected as the 2013 Canadian recipient of the Award for Action on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights

#### **2014**

Canada pledges \$120 million to the Global Partnership for Education for the four- year replenishment period 2015 – 2018

GRAN is welcomed as a member of Girls Not Brides

The Hill Team secures a meeting with John Baird, then Minister of Foreign Affairs

#### **2015**

“Hello Friends” gathering takes place in Ottawa with 70 GRANs in attendance

GRAN attends an evening on education sponsored by the Malala Fund and Global Affairs Canada

Nine cities and communities hold Orange lighting events

#### **2016**

With the assistance of May Chazan, the Archives team produces three “media capsules” and York University Archives accepts custody of the GRAN archives

GRAN presents a brief on the TPP to the Standing Committee on Trade

In conjunction with the University of Ottawa and the International Longevity Centre, GRAN organizes an “Older Women Count!” conference in Ottawa with opening remarks from Patty Hajdu, then Minister of the Status of Women

Canadian government pledges \$785 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and hosts the Replenishment Conference in Montreal

18 cities and communities participate in the Orange Campaign

#### **2017**

Following MSF’s “Fair Shot” campaign, GSK and Pfizer agree to reduce their price on pneumonia vaccines to \$9 per child for humanitarian organizations

GRAN is acknowledged in the MSF magazine, *Dispatches*, for our contribution to the success of their “Fair Shot” campaign, complete with photo of us from Hello Friends

We send our first representative to the UN to attend the Civil Society Hearing in preparation for the High-Level Meeting on Ending AIDS

Canada becomes the 57<sup>th</sup> country to sign on to the Safe Schools Declaration

23 cities and communities participate in the Orange Campaign

GRAN is recognized in the House of Commons for our work during the Orange Campaign to end gender-based violence

An important report, *Older Women Count!*, is completed by a team of GRANs providing valuable information on the situation and challenges faced by older women in sub-Saharan Africa

## **2018**

Canada announces that it will double its commitment to the GPE to \$180 million over three years

Motion M-132 requiring the Standing Committee on Health to undertake a study of ways of increasing public benefits from health research passes second reading in the House of Commons

Ten GRANs meet with 200 Ugandan grandmothers and hear their stories and make connections with Ugandan women’s organizations

A blog submission submitted to ICAD is published in the Huffington Post

23 cities and communities participate in the Orange Campaign