



grandmothers

Advocacy Network

Mouvement de soutien des

grands-mères

GRANDMOTHERS ADVOCACY NETWORK

STRATEGIC PLAN 2014 - 2018

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“At UNICEF, advocacy is defined as the continuous and adaptive process of gathering, organizing and formulating information about data into argument, which is then communicated to policy-makers through various interpersonal and mass media communication channels.”

www.unicef.org/cbxc/index_42346.html

At Amnesty International, advocacy is defined as “...*high-level legislative work, media outreach and grassroots mobilization to shape and promote legislation and policies to advance human rights, protect individuals and free prisoners of conscience.*”

www.amnestyusa.org/about-us/our-mission

INTRODUCTION

The Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN) is a multi-partisan¹ dynamic network of volunteers who advocate in Canada and internationally, for program and policy changes that can improve the lives of sub-Saharan African grandmothers and vulnerable children and youth. It provides guidance and co-ordination of advocacy efforts for participants across Canada.

Our Advocacy:

Our advocacy is rooted in our understanding of the situation of grandmothers in Africa and vulnerable children and youth. We seek to influence the Canadian public and government and international audiences to respond to the human rights tragedy and devastation experienced by grandmothers and children in Africa.²

GRAN advocacy can include many activities such as informing people about an issue, media campaigns, public speaking, publishing and sharing knowledge, informing and mobilizing others, communicating with elected officials, representing our issues at events and forums, posting position statements, and working with partners and coalitions on a particular campaign.

Our Strategic Plan:

The GRAN strategic plan is grounded in the collective and creative wisdom of GRAN participants as demonstrated in our work over the past two years. Our strategic plan is framed by our vision, mission and values. It identifies advocacy and organizational

¹ GRAN is multipartisan because we involve and take into account the views and concerns of all political parties. Our participants come from the whole spectrum of political parties. We encourage all parties to move issues forward for the greater humanitarian good without being influenced by the potential benefit for any particular party's view.

² For stylistic reasons, in this document, the term “Africa” refers to sub-Saharan Africa.

priorities for the coming five years and provides criteria for prioritizing, making decisions and evaluating those decisions. Our strategic plan is a living document that will be updated as needed and will be accompanied by an annual advocacy action plan and an annual operational plan.

VISION

Our vision is global recognition and promotion of the human rights of the heroic grandmothers, vulnerable children and youth in sub-Saharan Africa.

MISSION

The mission of GRAN is to advocate in meaningful and strategic ways for the human rights of grandmothers, vulnerable children and youth of sub-Saharan Africa.

VALUES

GRAN participants, in both their internal and external relationships, act in accordance with the following values:

Ubuntu is a sub-Saharan African philosophy and way of life. Ubuntu defines what it means to be truly human: we affirm our own humanity when we acknowledge the full humanity of others. Ubuntu principles include dignity, respect, empathy, caring, sharing and compassion.

Social justice encompasses securing/ensuring human rights, gender equality, equitable distribution of resources, and opportunities for full participation in social, educational, political and economic activities and a space for the human spirit to thrive in safe and healthy environments.

Honesty and transparency: honest and transparent communication and decision-making are critical to the healthy development of GRAN. GRAN advocates are provided with opportunities for full and open discussion and an understanding of the options available. Decision-making is preferably by consensus. External partners and the general public are provided with honest and clear communication regarding issues of mutual concern and the possibilities for mutual work.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The HIV/AIDS Pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa

The rate of HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa is stable or declining, but the numbers remain staggering: 25 million people in the region were living with HIV in 2012 and of

that number 2.9 million were children (www.unaids.org). Sub-Saharan Africa continues to bear a disproportionate share of the global HIV burden and women are disproportionately impacted by HIV. The most recent prevalence data show that 13 women in sub-Saharan Africa become infected with HIV for every 10 men. On the other hand, many positive developments have occurred in the past five years, particularly through the work of the Global Fund. Two examples are the development of the use of antiretroviral drugs to prevent transmission and the strides that have been made towards the elimination of mother to child HIV transmissions. There is a growing consensus that the end of the pandemic is an attainable goal.

The Unique Contribution of GRAN

In 2011, GRAN was formed as an independent organization. One of our first actions was to create an identity, a task accomplished through the very generous auspices of Banfield (then Banfield-Seguín Ltd.), an Ottawa communications and marketing agency. GRAN was officially incorporated as a not-for-profit on May 8, 2012. A Governance Working Group was formed in June, 2012 to provide overall direction in our work to define and develop further the structures and processes that govern the way we work together under the GRAN umbrella. An important development for GRAN is the decision to identify GRAN “participants,” as any individual who subscribes to GRAN’s mission and, normally, supplies their contact information.

What makes us unique is our focus on the grandmothers, vulnerable children and youth in sub-Saharan Africa, the demographic of our members comprised mostly of grandmothers ranging in age from fifties to eighties, and our grassroots approach to advocacy. GRAN has developed ongoing partnerships with Canadian organizations such as the Global Treatment Access Group (GTAG), the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD).

GRAN’s Strengths and Challenges

GRAN’s strengths, as identified by the Leadership Team at its annual retreat in 2014, are

- our relationship with knowledgeable advocacy partner organizations
- our development of governance and policies
- our history and reputation
- our communication internally and externally
- our dedicated, knowledgeable, experienced volunteers organized in clusters and regionally
- grandmothers and grand-others across Canada engaged on advocacy issues

These strengths enable us to accomplish our mission to advocate in meaningful and strategic ways for the human rights of grandmothers and children in Africa.

At the 2014 annual retreat the Leadership Team also identified the following challenges that need to be addressed in order to accomplish our mission:

- development of recruitment and succession planning processes
- development of connections with African grandmothers
- our limited financial resources

The political landscape in Canada as of September, 2014

The current Canadian political context is tremendously challenging for GRAN. Foreign aid funding has either flat-lined or decreased and resources available to civil society organizations have diminished. In 2013, CIDA was folded into a new department, The Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), causing some concern that policy decisions related to development will be influenced by commercial considerations. In this climate an important role for GRAN is to encourage Canada to deliver on its promises to the world's poor.

On the positive side, the 2010 Muskoka Initiative on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health announced at the G8 summit committed member nations to collectively spend an additional \$5 billion between 2010 and 2015 to accelerate progress toward the achievement of Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5, the reduction of maternal, infant and child mortality in developing countries. The Canadian government pledged a total of \$2.85 billion between 2010 and 2015. A second summit in Maternal, Newborn and Child Health was held in Toronto in 2014 at which Prime Minister Harper pledged \$3.5 billion to extend the maternal and child health initiative to 2020. The Canadian government has a strong interest in transparency, efficiency, results and accountability, all elements which might be reflected in our campaigns.

With an election in 2015 all parties are in electioneering mode and more acutely aware of public perception, especially through the media and communication with constituents at the riding level. The Conservatives, Liberals and New Democrats have been up and down in the polls since the Conservatives took office in 2006. There are no safe predictions about which party will be the governing party following the 2015 election.

The landscape in Africa as of September, 2014

The incoming post-2015 development agenda following up the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be formulated at a summit in September, 2015. How and where HIV/AIDS will fit within this new global development framework is still under debate and discussion, but it appears likely that HIV/AIDS will be integrated into broader health and development goals. However HIV is positioned in the post-2015 development agenda, measures will be needed to reduce the increasing discrimination facing LGBTI groups in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. There is also an urgent need to ensure that older people are recognized in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, in terms of their rights, needs and contributions, as well as how they are affected by HIV/AIDS.

To add to the challenges of poverty and disease, Africa is currently caught up in a tide of terrorist conflicts. The Somali extremist group, Al-Shabaab, has waged a terror campaign in the Horn of Africa and across East Africa, with attacks spreading to neighbouring Kenya. In West Africa, the region has been rocked by instability by the Nigerian-based extremist group, Boko Haram. Rape, sexual violence and kidnapping of girls and women in war and conflict zones has an impact on grandmothers, women and children that is complex, broad and deep: exposure to HIV, damaged sense of self, pregnancy, to name a few. The intent of these terrorists is to deter families from educating girls, and is all the more terrible because it's already so hard for girls to continue in education in the region beyond the primary level.

While the proportion of Africa's population living in extreme poverty is falling, the total number of extremely poor people rose by more than 20 million between 2002 and 2012. Unemployment may lead to further instability, and while access to education has improved, learning outcomes are below expectations. (www.allafrica.com). Secondary level education for girls is critical for advancing the prospects for young women, yet is still the exception in many sub-Saharan countries. The majority of women work in insecure, poorly paid jobs, with few opportunities for advancement. Older women (especially those who are raising children alone) are the poorest of the poor in Africa.

GOALS

GRAN has developed a strategic framework that identifies two overarching strategic goals, priority methods of achieving these goals, some key opportunities, and a set of measurable outcomes that will further our mission and guide our advocacy and organizational growth over the next five years.

Two Overarching Goals

1. **Advocacy:** To stimulate policy change and effective Canadian and international action to address the challenges faced by grandmothers, vulnerable children and youth in Africa
2. **Organization:** To build a robust, open, inclusive and effective grandmothers advocacy network and capacity across Canada

Advocacy Goal

To stimulate policy change and effective government action in Canada, and internationally, to address the difficult circumstances of grandmothers, vulnerable children and youth in Africa by

- 1. Grounding our advocacy in the needs and rights of grandmothers in Africa who are not only bearing the brunt of the AIDS pandemic, but are also suffering from other communicable diseases and non-communicable diseases of aging.**
 - our advocacy to include the elimination of the exclusion, discrimination and invisibility that grandmothers experience
- 2. Using a human rights framework, which is understood to include the concept of social justice, that will enable GRAN to refer to global agreements, conventions and laws to strengthen advocacy positions for the issues selected**
 - we view all our work through a human rights lens
- 3. Selecting advocacy issues according to the following criteria:**
 - the issue is of vital importance to the well-being of African grandmothers and vulnerable children and youth
 - GRAN has a role and can have an impact
 - there are feasible winnable ASKs
 - there are opportunities for collaboration with credible NGOs at various levels
 - it is a politically opportune time to pursue this issue
 - it is a good fit with other issues
- 4. Advocating in three areas of human rights: the right to safety and security; the right to health; and the right to full participation, gender equity and respect.**
 - three key issues were identified in 2013: violence against women, education, and access to medicines. These three inter-related umbrella issues may be pursued in more than one context in the coming years.
 - establish and sustain working groups to research, educate and plan GRAN actions on advocacy issues. Three Working Groups have been formed to guide campaigns on violence against women, education, and access to medicines.

- 5. Mobilizing grandmothers and others in communities across the country to call for meaningful Canadian and international action to make a difference in the lives of African grandmothers, women and children**
 - GRAN's diverse participants will require a range of actions in a variety of formats to ensure that our campaigns resonate and correspond with ways of working that are comfortable to them
- 6. Ensuring that Canadian development assistance focuses on ending poverty and promoting gender equality, human rights and social justice**
 - focus on empowerment in the following areas: legal equality in land ownership, equality in the justice system, access to fair employment, access to school, respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights
- 7. Supporting the strengthening of social protection coverage for older caregivers in Africa, including old age pensions and child benefits**
 - meet with grandmother advocacy organizations in sub-Saharan Africa

Strategies

- build long-term advocacy partnerships with NGOs key to our work in Canada, Africa and on the world stage
- develop programs for systematically engaging MPs and tracking progress
- have a presence in international conferences and at the UN on key issues
- talk to local leaders, the private sector, academics and youth groups
- prepare for the 2015 federal election campaign, starting with letters from the Steering Committee to political parties with concerns for party platforms and developing an election kit and questions to candidates
- connect our issues with the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) to show our relevance to the post-2015 development agenda

Organizational Goal

To build a robust, open, inclusive and effective grandmothers advocacy network and capacity across Canada by

- 1. Growing and strengthening GRAN both in terms of numerical and regional participation as well as in bonding/spirit building/diversity of participants and working to achieve bilingual capacity**

Strategies

Ongoing

- increase GRAN participants from our base by 5% per year and strive toward diversity in our recruitment
- expand national network through personal networks and through professional and social associations such as immigrant associations
- establish local, regional and national public profile through media and events

Short term (2014-2015)

- increase production of documents and media available in French including video
- develop a campaign to attract francophone participation in GRAN
 - highlight issues of interest to francophones
 - consult with advisers such as Helene Laverdiere
 - host an event in Quebec
- hold a Hello Friends conference in 2015

Mid term (2015-2017)

- develop a recruitment plan to attract younger participants over issues such as child marriage
- explore the development of GRAN regional groups
- conduct an advertising campaign
- establish international GRAN presence

Long term (2017-2018)

- research the feasibility of establishing GRAN participation in other countries

2. Being acknowledged by journalists, politicians and civil society as a respected advocacy organization

Strategies

Short term (2014-2015)

- increase membership in Media Working Group and/or Communications Group
- strengthen media contacts across the country
 - appearances as issues experts on local and national radio and TV shows
 - articles and opinions pieces in newspapers and magazines

- increase Twitter participation among GRANs
- hold meetings with MPs pre-election to determine their positions on the three issues

Medium term (2015-2017)

- development of videos and social media including blogs and Facebook
- development of a tool to communicate more in-depth information about GRAN and GRAN's issues
- host workshops and meetings for journalists on GRAN issues
- increase numbers of meetings with bureaucrats and politicians
- attend international conferences
- develop partnerships with relevant NGOs and associations such as student associations, YWCA, church groups, CFUW
- develop an ad campaign (see "I Am A Girl" as one model)

Long term (2017-2018)

- participate in international conferences

3. Becoming financially self-sustaining

Strategies

- apply for funds in the short term (2014-2015) for
 - ongoing advocacy projects
 - translation costs
 - website development and maintenance costs
 - administration and supplies
 - Leadership Team and Working Group travel costs
- apply for funds in the medium term (2015-2017) for
 - media campaign costs including printing, video, advertising, and newsletter production
 - travel and conference and teleconference attendance costs
 - funding for local, regional and national events
 - membership dues in relevant organizations
 - webinars
- apply for funds in the long term (2017-2018) for
 - GRANAfrican 2
 - Travel to and from Africa
- potential funding sources include
 - foundations such as Gates, Stronach, McConnell, Chagnon. A search of likely foundations should be conducted.
 - unions such as OPSEU, UNIFOR, and teachers' unions

- companies, service clubs and financial institutions

4. Expanding our network through partnership development with sub-Saharan African groups

Strategies

Short term (2014-2015)

- identify a point person to research and plan African connections
- use Canadian GRAN participants who travel to Africa to make connections
- explore connections at Hello Friends 2015
- connect with global women's organizations in Africa e.g. African Women's Development Fund and Global Fund for Women

Mid term (2015-2017)

- develop discussion points for use with groups in Africa to identify areas of collaboration and support
- participate in international conferences on GRAN issues that include sub-Saharan African grandmothers

Long term (2017-2018)

- become the "go to" Canadian advocacy group working on issues affecting grandmothers, vulnerable children and youth in sub-Saharan Africa

KEY DATES/POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES 2014-2018

- Sustainability Development Goals: International Symposium on the Post-2015 Agenda November 12 and 13, 2014
- AIDS Conference in Vancouver: July 19-22, 2015
- Federal election: October 2015
- Federal budgets: Fall consultations, spring budgets
- House of Commons recesses
- G7 and G8 meetings
- Grandparents Weekend: first weekend in September
- World AIDS Day: December 1
- International Women's Day: March 8
- Global Fund Replenishment: 2017
- Global Partnership for Education Replenishment: 2018

EVALUATION AND MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Evaluation

Evaluations, including analyses, surveys and interviews, will be conducted to gain insight into current initiatives, to enable reflection and to assist in the identification of future change. Feedback will be collected from grandmothers in Canada and Africa, partners, and decision-makers.

Measurable Outcomes

Advocacy

To stimulate policy change and effective government action to address the challenges of grandmothers and vulnerable children and youth in Africa

- Production, distribution, use and effectiveness of tools
- Number of meetings, letters, calls to MPs in ridings across Canada
- Responses from MPs, Ministers, Prime Minister
- Advocacy events across Canada
- Media and web site hits
- Participation in international conferences
- International presence
- Meetings with grandmother advocacy organizations in sub-Saharan Africa
- Benefits to grandmothers and children in Africa, including rural women
- At least one major “win” for an advocacy “ask”

Organizational

To build a robust, open, inclusive and effective grandmothers advocacy network and capacity across Canada

- Number and diversity of GRAN participants involved in advocacy work
- Francophone participation including the establishment of at least one francophone GRAN group
- Involvement of African grandmothers through tangible contacts, clear roles and stronger ties
- Funding established for ongoing advocacy work, for advertising and for attendance at conferences
- GRAN participants motivated to be on Steering Committee and on Leadership Team

- Media requests for interviews on human rights issues
- Government recognition of GRAN as having expertise on human rights issues
- GRAN recognized by broad range of politicians
- Evaluations completed

“Not only is another world possible, she’s on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”

Arundhati Roy