



Annual Report

April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020

Introduction

This annual report is prepared for the 7th Annual General Meeting of GRAN to be held by teleconference on May 13, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. (EDT).

As we look back over the year, few could have predicted that the world would shift so dramatically and rapidly on its axis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. And while the pandemic is devastating some of the world's best organized and wealthiest nations, what will become of Africa where the fragility of health systems, limited numbers of medical professionals and health-care workers and a lack of adequate equipment all make the region particularly vulnerable?

"All of this is so minimal on the continent that if the coronavirus hits in a brutal and ferocious way, as is predicted by some, then we will experience again the kind of devastation that we saw during the height of the AIDS pandemic in the late 90s and early 2000s. And it is just a nightmare."

-- Stephen Lewis

This makes GRAN's mission more important than ever as we continue to advocate in meaningful and strategic ways to protect and promote the human rights of grandmothers, children and youth in sub-Saharan Africa. And while we press our governments and the international community to provide robust assistance to the most vulnerable of the vulnerable, we are also hopeful that this global crisis will allow for a reset of priorities that will promote a more just and equitable world.

This past year, in a major effort to expand our reach and our reputation, GRAN produced and released a video entitled *Advocacy GRAN Style*. There could be no better introduction to the GRAN 2019/2020 Annual Report.



[Click image to play video through default web browser](#)

Advocacy Campaigns and Resources

Access to Medicines

THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA

GRAN worked once again with other civil society organizations advocating the Canadian government for an early and ambitious contribution to the Global Fund replenishment conference held in October 2019. This highly successful fund fights the diseases of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and has been responsible for saving countless lives.

GRAN was delighted when, in August of 2019, the Canadian government announced a contribution of \$930.4M to the Global Fund to support its work from 2020 to 2022. This is an increase of 15.7% over the level Canada committed in the previous round of replenishment.



Civil society members (including GRAN's Irene Clarke in front row on far right) at Global Fund announcement with Minister Monsef

A COVID-19 VACCINE AVAILABLE AND FREE TO ALL

As scientists around the world are racing against time to develop a vaccine to tackle the spread of COVID-19, social justice activists are reminding us of the need to ensure that this vaccine will be free and available to all, not just to those who can afford it.

GRAN has joined a global movement to ensure publicly-funded diagnostic tools, treatment and the COVID-19 vaccine will be sustainably priced, available to all and free at the point-of-delivery.

Education

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WEEK



Valerie Wright, Co-Chair of the EdWG with Jenny Kwan, MP Vancouver East

As part of GRAN's participation in the 30th Anniversary of International Development Week, the Education Working Group participated in the Photo Gallery Walk on Parliament Hill organized by the Canadian International Education Policy Working Group (CIEPWG). Following personal invitations from GRAN members, several Members of Parliament attended the event, which allowed GRAN to have conversations with them about GRAN's commitment to advocate for access to quality education and the importance of Canada supporting global education development.

ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS

The Education Working Group developed a new resource entitled, *Engaging Men and Boys to End Violence through Education: Awareness, Engagement, Action*. While not an advocacy campaign per se, the document provides a source of ideas for GRANs across the country who may want to learn more about the issue of engaging men and boys to end violence against women and children. The resource is available on GRAN's [website](#).

Ending Violence Against Women

ORANGE CAMPAIGN

Although the decision was taken this past year not to mount a national campaign due to our advocacy activity during the 2019 Federal Election, many GRANs and GRAN groups marked the 16 Days of Activism with community-based events. The 2019 UN Campaign focused on rape as a specific form of harm committed against women and girls, in times of both peace and war.



Quinte GRANs in Bellville, Ontario

GRANs across the country arranged for their mayors to issue proclamations and light city landmarks up in orange, held candlelit vigils and organized provocative discussions regarding the need to end violence against women. They bedecked their communities with giant orange bows and distributed



Victoria GRANs distributing pamphlets

orange ribbons and pamphlets on street corners, in libraries, and to family and friends to raise awareness.

During this important international event, GRANs once again stood in solidarity with African grandmothers who have been disproportionately impacted by the AIDS pandemic which is both a cause and consequence of violence against women and girls.

Mining Justice

MINING WATCHDOG WITH TEETH

In April 2019 Sheri Meyerhoffer was appointed as the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE), but her mandate fell far short of the independent watchdog the government had promised. As a consequence, citing an erosion of trust, civil society and labour representatives on the Multi Stakeholder Advisory Body on Responsible Business Conduct resigned in July 2019. GRAN joined 36 civil society organizations that jointly collected over 6,000 signatures on an Amnesty International petition urging that the government honour its commitment to create an independent watchdog to hold Canadian mining companies accountable for their practices abroad. GRAN is deeply disappointed that there has been little progress in achieving this goal. The Mining Justice Working Group continues to work with its partners to develop new strategies to move our advocacy on this issue forward.



Security Forces confront villagers at the North Mara Mine, Tanzania

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION: MINING JUSTICE: A CALL TO ACTION

The working group has revised and updated its Power Point presentation as a resource for GRANs who would like to learn more about this issue. (Available on [the website](#) using members' log in.)

New Initiatives in 2019/2020

Ad Hoc Group on UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons (CROP)

A GRAN ad hoc group on CROP was formed to discuss the importance of this proposed Convention and to report to the Steering Committee. As a result, it was agreed that the ad hoc group carry on as a “CROP Watch Group” to stay up to date on this UN process and keep GRAN informed on progress. Other recommendations included that GRAN seek accreditation with the UN Open-Ended Working Group before the 2020 session, that we work with the International Longevity Centre and other relevant Canadian groups to build support for the Convention, and that we mobilize interest in a webinar on CROP.

WEBINAR ON THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS

The graphic is a promotional poster for a webinar. At the top, it lists logos for 'grandmothers Advocacy Network', 'International Longevity Centre', and 'International Federation on Ageing'. The main title is 'Mobilizing to Support the Rights of Older Persons'. Below the title, there is a list of bullet points: 'As governments, civil society, researchers and advocates for the rights of older persons continue to meet at the United Nations, momentum is building in support of a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.', 'The IFA and the Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN) are pleased to announce the next webinar discussing the rights of older persons. The webinar will', 'Explore the pervasive tendency to discount the rights of older people in Canada and in the global arena.', 'Present a case study on the rights of older women/grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa', 'Argue that a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons is needed to protect and enhance older persons' rights', and 'Discuss how we can take action steps to create momentum and Canadian leadership in preparing and ratifying the Convention.' In the center, there are two circular portraits: one of Peggy Edwards, Moderator, and one of Margaret Olick, Keynote Speaker. On the right side, there is a calendar icon showing '27 November', a clock icon showing '2PM - 3PM Eastern Standard Time', and a purple button that says 'Register Now'.

For the first time ever, in collaboration with the International Federation on Ageing and the International Longevity Centre, GRAN hosted its own webinar!

Over 100 people joined the discussion which explored the impact of ageism on the rights of older persons, including a case study on the rights of older women/grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa.

Federal Election and Survey

In the run-up to the October 2019 Federal Election the Hill Team produced an impressive suite of easy-to-use resources to help GRANs engage with candidates and ask them to support increased investment in International Assistance.

In November, the Hill Team led a project to get post-election feedback on GRAN's campaign. We used Survey Monkey to ask a series of questions about GRAN members' participation in the campaign and to seek views



on the resources and communication tools we are providing to support advocacy. We were very pleased that 146 GRANs responded to the survey and we were impressed with the quality of the responses. We learned that almost 74% of those responding participated in the campaign. They reported that they had written and met with candidates, spoken to community groups, friends and family, used social media, and handed out postcards. A large majority of GRANs felt that the campaign had been either “effective” (47%) or “somewhat effective” (46%). We now have a very good list of MPs that GRANs report are supportive of increases in international assistance. This will allow us to shape future efforts on this issue by targeting some of those MPs.

Of a more general nature, we received great feedback on the communications tools we are using to support advocacy. The three top tools identified were: GRAN Action emails, the GRAN Update, and meetings with GRAN groups. Finally, we also heard that GRANs are keen to continue our efforts to increase international assistance and that there is a strong interest in pursuing the climate crisis issue and its impacts on sub-

Saharan Africa. We also noted strong continuing commitment to the human rights of African grandmothers and the importance of ensuring solid links between the issues we pursue and these rights.

Climate Crisis



It is evident that the climate crisis is having a significant impact on the grandmothers of sub-Saharan Africa. The increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events has had a multiplier effect on the other challenges that they face, including those in the four areas of GRAN's focus: health, education, violence against women, and poverty.

In January 2020, GRAN decided to pursue advocacy actions directed at the climate crisis. An all-of-GRAN approach is being used, given the broad impact of this issue on all the work we do. A small Climate Strategy Group has been set up for one year and will liaise with the Hill Team and the Working Groups. The Climate Strategy Group will create an advocacy action plan, develop partnerships, identify and produce resources, and provide support and coordination. During the year we will monitor how this approach is working for GRAN. It will be important to identify GRAN's niche in climate crisis advocacy, and maintain our focus on the grandmothers in SSA and those in their care.

HOUSE OF COMMONS PETITION e-2395

Sponsored by Elizabeth May, [Petition e-2395](#) calls on the Government of Canada to commit at least 50% of Canada's public climate finance for developing countries towards climate adaptation, and at least 15% towards projects that target gender equality as a primary objective. As an early action, GRAN members have been encouraged to sign this petition, and to share it electronically with their GRAN groups, other interested community groups, family and friends. (Gaining signatures on the print version of the petition was put on hold once the COVID-19 protocols regarding social distancing were put in place.)

Hello Friends 2020 Postponed

An enthusiastic group of GRAN volunteers was busy finalizing plans for GRAN's upcoming national gathering, *Hello Friends 2020*, when we were forced by the COVID-19 pandemic to postpone it until 2021. Those who have attended this bi-annual gathering in the past know that it provides a rich opportunity for friendship, learning, and reigniting our shared passion for justice. We always come away inspired, strengthened, and energized. It is always a terrific opportunity for those new to GRAN to dive in and learn a lot quickly, and for long-timers to renew ties with GRANs from other regions and to learn new things too! *Hello Friends* is by far our most valued GRAN event for providing face-to-face connection to share and explore new ideas together and to offer input into GRAN's vision and priorities going forward. We are grateful that the Hello Friends Planning Committee has agreed to stay on to plan the event for 2021.

Archives

The first deposit of GRAN materials to the Archives at York University, Toronto, covering 2008 to 2016, took place last year. The collection of materials covering the years 2017, 2018 and 2019 is now complete. The year of 2018 is noteworthy due to the success of the *Hello Friends* conference in early June. The material covering 2019 is important as it highlights GRAN's hard work toward the successful replenishment of the Global Fund, as well as the launch of GRAN's Mining Justice campaign. GRAN also actively participated in the Federal

Election by adding our voices to encourage candidates to increase spending for International Assistance. When York University reopens after COVID-19, this material will be deposited to the Archives.

Partners and Allies

GRAN maintains an important number of national and international partnerships to carry out our work. This year, to advance our climate crisis advocacy GRAN joined the Climate Action Network-Canada (CAN-Rac Canada) and the Climate Action Network International. CARE Canada is another important ally.

GRAN's membership in the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability supports our advocacy for mining justice. A full list of our partnerships can be found [on the GRAN website](#).

Communications

New Resources!

This past year GRAN devoted a significant amount of time and energy to developing new resources to reach out to our members, our partners and our communities.

GRAN Brochure

Our brochure got a makeover this past year to reflect our human rights framework. And it is now bilingual. You can access the updated printable brochure [on our website](#).

GRAN Video



Sharon Swanson

In June of 2019 GRAN released “ADVOCACY, GRAN STYLE”, a six-minute video about GRAN’s work and the dedicated women who make GRAN the vibrant organization that it is. The video was made possible by the generosity, creativity and hard work of Jeff Young, a talented Toronto photographer who dedicates his time to developing promotional story videos for NGOs. Many thanks go to Sharon Swanson, Peggy Edwards, and Irene Clarke who spent many hours working on this project. The video is intended to help promote the work of GRAN to our groups, at public events, and even to our own grandchildren! It is available on our [website](#).



Peggy Edwards

GRAN – Our Beginnings

Another inspiring video, entitled “GRAN: Our Beginnings” was added to YouTube and GRAN’s website. This video describes the very beginnings of the GRAN movement (initially started as the National Advocacy Committee). Pat Evans interviews the two founding co-chairs, Peggy Edwards and Kathleen Wallace Deering. They describe the initial meeting in 2006 with Stephen Lewis and the excitement as the movement grew. [Click here](#) to access it.

Website Redesign



Our website is now sporting a new homepage that reflects our commitment to the human rights of older women in sub-Saharan Africa. This re-design has been a year in the making and began early in 2019 when GRAN created a guiding framework for our organization focused on four human rights areas. Our website now aligns with and reflects this new framework. We hope our new home page will draw people in and be easy to navigate.

An added feature on this new home page is a **TAKE ACTION** button which links to all current GRAN actions in one simple click. You will find our news posts and Twitter feed located at the bottom of the page. The rest of the site remains unchanged. You are still able to find our campaign pages and resources by using the menu bar across the top.

Direct Communications

GRAN continues to reach out to our members through direct email communication, social media, and video- and teleconferencing.

GRAN Emails: Two types of GRAN emails are sent out regularly to GRAN members. The first is “GRAN News” which can be an informative online article related to our advocacy campaigns, or interesting and inspiring stories from sub-Saharan Africa. The second type is a call to take “GRAN Action”. Many advocacy actions are time-sensitive and this method of communication enables us to contact our members quickly and directly.

Social Media: We encourage our members to use social media, primarily Twitter and Facebook, as much as possible to amplify our messages and to support the campaigns of our partners. Guidelines have been developed for those who post on behalf of the GRAN Facebook and Twitter accounts.

GRAN Update: The newsletter called the *GRAN Update* is sent out every month to all our members. It contains news about our ongoing campaigns, news from our partners, stories from GRAN members all over the country, and any other information that is relevant to our issues.

Video Conferencing: Many of our working groups have found Skype less and less reliable. Some have started to experiment with Zoom. The Leadership Team has taken out a subscription to Zoom on a trial basis to test its effectiveness for our organization.

Aeroplan

The donations we received this year totalled 58,329 miles which was considerably short of our goal of 125,000 miles. Many thanks to those people who did donate miles and also to those who generously sent cash donations for travel in lieu of miles. We understand that fewer of our members continue to collect Aeroplan points, therefore we will need to think further of ways to address this shortfall.

Fundraising

The GRAN 2020 February Fundraising Campaign was a resounding success thanks to generous donations from GRANs and GRAN supporters. The target this year was set at \$4,000 and we raised an amazing \$5,615! Our organization relies entirely on donations, as we receive no external funding, and the critical work we do occurs through the many volunteer hours of our members working together across Canada. Staying connected to each other and to our allied organizations is critical to our success. Conference calls, registration fees and travel to regional, national, and international meetings, and maintaining our web site all require ongoing funding.

Thank you to all our members who have worked so tirelessly for justice this past year. We have learned and accomplished so much together. As we look forward, let us take heart from the words of Chris Dendys, Executive Director of Results Canada:

"As global leaders invest in responding, reconstructing and rebuilding at home and abroad, let's not repair our world to restore its existing and persistent state of inequity. We have the opportunity to learn from the lessons of COVID-19 and rebuild our world for the better. Together, we can aspire to the world we need: a healthier, equitable, and more resilient world for all."

Grandmothers Advocacy Network April 2020

Appendix

Leadership Team

Co-Chairs:

Janet Siddall (Whitehorse, YT)

Pat Dolan (Gatineau, QC)

Ruth Buckinger (Sackville, NB)

Irene Clarke (Oakville, ON) Treasurer

Pauline Barrett (Vancouver, BC)

Myrtle Blinn (Ottawa, ON)

Sharon Graham (Brighton, ON)

Linda Kulkarni (Smith Falls, ON)

Recording Secretaries:

Sue McKenna

Gaye-Frances Alexander

Access to Medicines Working Group

Rotating Co-Chairs

Irene Clarke

Lynda Lang

Marian Lothian

Mary Spoke

JoAnn Mulhern

Education Working Group

Co-Chairs

Valerie Wright

Ann Frost

Phyllis Webster

Linda Kulkarni

Sharon Swanson

Diane Woods

Ending Violence Against Women Working Group

Chair

Janet Siddall

Mining Justice Working Group

Co-Chairs

Anne Young

Diane Scaletta

Janet Siddall

Mining Justice WG continued...

Jan Sosiak

Rae Yates

Ann Frost

Hilary Elliott

Liz Dill

Shirley Swift

Phyllis Webster

Gaye-Frances Alexander

Christine Bennet

CROP Watch Group

Chair

Irene Clarke

Betty Ann Knutson

Phyllis Webster

Peggy Edwards

Irene Turpie

Valerie Wright

Andrea Beal

Climate Strategy Group

Chair

Linda Kulkarni

JoAnn Mulhern

Ann Frost

Bev McKibbin

Susan Carter

Marian Lothian

Pat Dolan

Hill Team

Chair

Hilary Elliott

Pat Dolan

Myrtle Blinn

Bev McKibbin

Bunny Keeley

Valerie Wright

Susan Carter

Sheila Robertson

Marian Lothian

Web Team

Coordinator
Ruth Buckinger

Annie Creighton
Kathy O'Neill
Daniel Hegarty (technical support)

Archives

Bonnie Symons

Volunteer Translators

Coordinators
Ruth Buckinger
Mia Overduin

Lina Halle
Suzanne Dufresne
Johanne Brisson
Gisèle Mansfield
Roland Breton
Cathy Blondeau

Regional Leaders

British Columbia

Pauline Barret
JoAnn Mulhern
Gail Boylan
Sharon Swanson
Rita Taenzer

Prairies

Jenny Neal

Ontario

Annie Creighton
Barb Rother
Irene Clarke
Sharon Graham
Joyce Nicholson
Gaye-Frances Alexander

Quebec

Pamela Walden-Landry
Suzanne Dufresne

Atlantic

Sue McKenna
Marilyn Coolen