



Annual Report

April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022

The Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN) is a nonpartisan network of volunteers who advocate in Canada and internationally for program and policy changes that will promote and protect the human rights of vulnerable women and communities in the Global South, with a specific focus on older women, children, youth, and gender-diverse persons in sub-Saharan Africa.

A Renewed Vision and Mission

Our vision is a world where the human rights of older women, children and youth, and gender-diverse persons are recognized and protected so that they can achieve their full potential.

Our passion for this vision is a deep concern for the human rights and well-being of grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa and the children and youth in their care, as well as those of vulnerable and marginalized women in communities of the Global South.

The mission of GRAN is to advocate for the human rights of these vulnerable groups, both globally and locally.

Our mission recognizes that, despite their courage and resilience, grandmothers, older women, and young people in sub-Saharan Africa experience gross inequities due to the intersection of multiple factors, among them: poverty, age, gender, and the stigma attached to HIV and AIDS. Our mission also recognizes and is made more urgent by the fact that inequalities are increasing between low-, middle- and high-income countries.

“The Year in Review” -- with GRAN Co-Chairs Janet Siddall and Pat Dolan

Much has been accomplished this year, as you will see in reading this Annual Report. We've moved our issues forward and we've taken bold steps to renew and re-energize GRAN. The need for our advocacy only grows as the world continues to face multiple crises.



The COVID-19 pandemic is having a devastating effect on the Global South and, in particular, on the people of sub-Saharan Africa, exacerbating the inequalities already faced by vulnerable populations. The [pandemic](#) has been associated with a rise in extreme poverty and hunger, and with reversals in progress on health and education. Around the world we have seen [high rates of illness and death](#), and [increases in gender-based violence](#). [One of the most underreported effects of the pandemic](#) is the negative impact on adolescent girls, with increased rates of teenage pregnancy and early marriage, and untold numbers of girls who will never return to school.

So we press on with our much-needed advocacy for justice. We push for Health Equity, with a new all-of-GRAN campaign; we amplify the voices of the climate justice community; we call out the bad behaviour of Canadian mining companies; we advocate for an end to violence against women, and we work tirelessly to promote education and lifelong learning.

GRAN is in a unique position among Canadian Civil Society Organizations as a national volunteer network of older women with life experience that motivates us to advocate for the human rights of our sisters around the world. We work closely with and benefit from our relationships with well-respected organizations such as ONE Canada, Results Canada, Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and Development, Climate Action Network, Canadian International Education Policy Working Group and others.

Regional GRAN Groups lead the way at the local level. They sponsor panels and film festivals, work with community partners, reach out to Members of Parliament, make their voices heard at climate protests, and colour our communities orange and purple each year during the Orange Campaign/16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. For many of us, a significant part of our attachment to GRAN is the connections and friendships we make while working together with like-minded women at home and across the country.

We appreciate all of you -- all those who stepped up this past year to lead the way in our Future Directions review, and those of you who responded again and again to our calls for action, who planned and chaired regional and national meetings, who faithfully recorded meeting decisions, who attended CSO partner meetings on behalf of GRAN, who managed

and updated our website and who regularly raised awareness on social media. Such a lot of work and dedication, and so very much appreciated. Thank you.

We are women, hear us roar!

Janet and Pat

May 2022

Education and Lifelong Learning

[Education](#) is a fundamental human right that is being left unrealized in many lower-income countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, and especially for girls. Education transforms lives. Education reduces poverty, fosters economic prosperity, reduces exploitation, deepens the foundations of democracy, creates healthier societies and enables people to reach their full potential. In 2021, GRAN's Education Watch Group provided leadership in advocacy for increased funding for the [Global Partnership for](#)



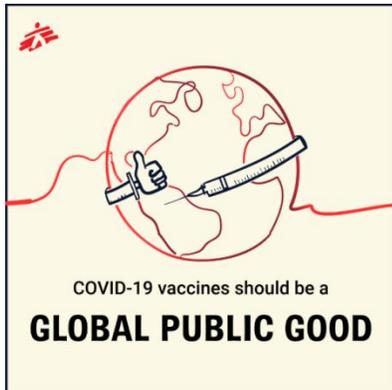
Photo credit: Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

[Education](#) (GPE). Canada is a founding member and active partner of the GPE, the world's largest education partnership and fund dedicated exclusively to quality education for every girl and boy in lower-income countries around the world. Advocacy actions in support of the GPE replenishment included:

- A GRAN learning event entitled “*Write for the Right to Education*” with MP Laurel Collins and Robinah Matende from Uganda;
- Communications targeted at local MPs, including letters and an informative “Leave Behind” about the GPE;
- Letters to the Editors of Canadian newspapers in the lead-up to the G7 meeting in June 2021;
- Collaborating with and amplifying messages of our partners at the Canadian International Education Policy Working Group (CIEPWG) and ONE Canada, and support for the UN Girls' Education Initiative;
- Participation at an Education Round Table with the Minister of International Development and Global Affairs, coordinated by CIEPWG.

At the Global Education Summit held in July 2021, the Global Partnership for Education raised US\$4 billion, putting it firmly on the path to achieving its target of raising at least US\$5 billion over the next five years. GRAN was disappointed that Canada did not increase its pledge of \$300 million, but simply maintained its previous level of funding. Concern was expressed that this signalled a de-prioritization of education. In order to turn the tide on the global learning crisis, the government must increase its investments in global education in future years.

Health and Well-being

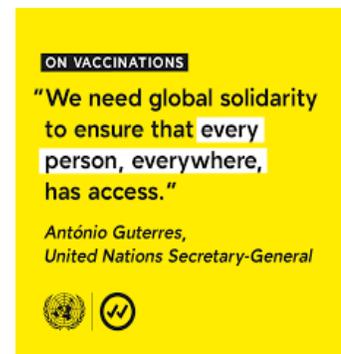


Courtesy of MSF Access

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being at all ages is essential to sustainable development. Currently, the world is facing a [global health crisis](#) unlike any other -- COVID-19 is spreading human suffering, destabilizing the global economy, and upending the lives of billions of people around the globe. The world's best hope to end the pandemic rests with the development, manufacture, and distribution of effective vaccines and therapeutics. Everyone must have access if we are to end this global public health emergency. The vaccines and therapeutics that are developed will need to be affordable, available to all, and free to those receiving them.

GRAN's Access to Medicines Watch Group worked tirelessly through the year in advocating for vaccine equity for people in lower-income countries. Actions included:

- Participating in the *Free the Vaccine* campaign encouraging McGill University to make its COVID-related research findings available to all (free of patents);
- Support for campaigns initiated by Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM) and Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) to put public health above private profits, so that vaccines, tests and treatments developed with taxpayer money will be sustainably priced, accessible to everyone, and free at the point of delivery;
- Letters and phone calls to MPs and a letter to the Prime Minister in support of the TRIPS Waiver proposal by India and South Africa at the World Trade Organization (WTO). The waiver would allow the suspension of intellectual property rights on a temporary basis so that smaller companies and smaller nations are able to research, create, and supply vaccines, tools and treatments currently protected by these WTO rules;
- Calling on Prime Minister Trudeau, ahead of the meeting of the G7 in June, to act on his government's stated commitment to share vaccines with COVAX (the global COVID vaccine distribution initiative) to help protect frontline health workers and people at high risk of dying from COVID-19 in lower-income countries;
- Creation of a [video message to the Prime Minister](#) on the TRIPS Waiver that generated much activity on Twitter and well over 200 viewings on YouTube;
- Support for Amnesty International's *100 Day Countdown* campaign calling on Big Pharma and governments around the world to redistribute 2 billion vaccine doses to lower-income countries before the end of 2021.



Much remains to be done in strengthening Canada's support for equitable access to vaccines and medical treatments by people in lower-income countries. [Health Equity: Fair Global Access to Lifesaving Medicines/Vaccines](#) is an all-of-GRAN campaign that will be the focus of GRAN advocacy in 2022. GRAN will be asking Canada to:

- Fully support the original TRIPS waiver (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property) at the World Trade Organization;
- Fulfill its commitment to provide 200 million doses to low-income countries through COVAX by the end of 2022; and
- Increase its pledge by 30%, to \$1.2 billion CAD, in the Seventh Replenishment of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.

Convention on the Rights of Older Persons (CROP)



Photo Courtesy of GAROP

“A Convention on the Rights of Older Persons (CROP) sees older people as rights holders. It can combat ageism, guide policy making, improve government accountability and educate and empower all of us. Enacting this global Convention will provide binding protection under international law for grandmothers and older women in Africa and in Canada, and indeed for all older persons, regardless of their gender identity or place of origin.” -- Margaret Gillis, President of the [International Longevity Centre, Canada \(ILC\)](#). A

Convention on the Rights of Older Persons would provide legal protection for [the human rights of older women](#), which are at the core of GRAN's advocacy.

GRAN's CROP Watch Group continued its focus on international recognition of the human rights of older persons. They have followed this work through the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing and have collaborated with the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP). Actions included:

- Attendance, virtually, at the 11th Annual Session of the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing held March 29 to April 1, 2021;
- Participation in the Aging with Rights campaign led by GAROP that included a global rally that was attended virtually by many. GAROP's goal is to grow a global advocacy movement for a new UN Convention on the Rights of Older People. The rally focused on the resilience of older persons worldwide and the importance for older people to participate in society and be heard.

Freedom from Violence

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation. One in three women worldwide experience physical or sexual violence, most often perpetrated by an intimate partner. From November 25th, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to December 10th, Human Rights Day, the United Nations *UNiTE Campaign: 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence* is a time to galvanize action to end violence against women and girls everywhere.



Quinte GRANS (ON)



GV GRANS Vancouver BC

For the past six years, GRANS across the country have participated in the United Nations *Orange the World Campaign: 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence*. The campaign has been an annual global event since 1991. Working creatively within the pandemic constraints, this past year many GRAN groups came together once again to [Orange the World](#) to end gender-based violence. Local landmarks were lit up in orange or purple, proclamations were read, and communities were bedecked with orange ribbons, lawn signs, and educational displays.

Climate Justice

The climate crisis most acutely affects those segments of the population that are already in vulnerable situations, including Indigenous Peoples, older persons, persons with disabilities, and women and children. [Climate justice](#) links human rights and development to achieve a human-centred approach in advocating for equity. Climate justice includes [intergenerational justice](#) and the importance of intergenerational partnerships. Under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), wealthy countries set a goal of mobilizing \$100 billion annually in climate finance by 2020 to address the adaptation and mitigation needs of developing countries. Unfortunately, in 2022 this goal has still not been met, nor has Canada contributed its fair share to this pledge. Advocacy actions taken this year include:



Photo Courtesy of Canadian Foodgrains Bank

- GRAN learning events focussed on climate justice and food security, profiling the work of women small-scale farmers in the Hleketani Community Garden in South Africa (with Dr. Elizabeth Vibert) and in southern Ethiopia (Canadian Foodgrains Bank);

- An Open Letter to Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Finance, asking for stable long-term funding for development of regenerative agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa and dedicated funding for women-led organizations;
- Participation, as a member of the Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and Development (C4D), in the pre-budget consultations with Global Affairs Canada, joining the call for increases to international climate finance with increased focus on most-vulnerable countries, climate adaptation, grants vs. loans, and funds accessible at the local level, including to women-led organizations;
- Support for youth climate leaders in FridaysForFuture at climate events across Canada, and through amplification of African youth voices on social media.



Ottawa/Gatineau GRANs

At the G7 Summit in June 2021, Canada committed to doubling its international climate finance, to \$5.3 billion over the next five years, including increased support for adaptation, as well as nature and nature-based solutions. Early disbursements of this funding have been in support of transforming local agriculture and food systems (recognizing the critical role of small-scale farmers in food production), nature-based solutions and biodiversity in sub-Saharan Africa, and projects across the Global South to support women’s leadership in climate action.

Mining Justice

Well-documented widespread human rights abuses have been associated with the activities of many Canadian mining companies abroad including:

- Gender-based violence;
- Seizure of land and water without local consultation;
- Serious illness and death resulting from toxic chemicals in the air, land and water;
- Injuries and death of peaceful protesters; and
- Destruction of cultural values and the social fabric of communities.

These companies must be held accountable for their actions in the communities in which they operate.

GRAN’s Mining Justice and Climate Justice Watch Groups came together to work collaboratively to address the growing international concern about Reconnaissance Africa (ReCon Africa), a Vancouver-registered mining company working in Namibia and Botswana. At risk are the human rights of the local people and potentially devastating



Photo credit: African Centre for Biodiversity

environmental impacts to this fragile ecosystem, with threats to both water security and biodiversity. Advocacy actions included:

- Advocacy with the Okavango Solidarity Group, an international network including Oil Change International, KAIROS, el clima, Climate Action Network, Stop Ecocide, Oil Watch Africa and SOUL (Saving Okavango's Unique Life), as well as attendance at meetings of the Canadian Network for Corporate Accountability (CNCA);
- GRAN Learning Event *Saving the Okavango Delta* with activists Ina-Maria Shikongo and Rob Parker and Green Party MP Elizabeth May;
- Telephone calls and letters to the Prime Minister and Ministers Ng and Wilkinson, asking for corporate accountability legislation for Canadian corporations operating abroad and legislation to strengthen the powers of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise in investigating abuses;
- Support for a number of petitions including an e-petition launched by Green MP Elizabeth May to investigate the impacts of the ReconAfrica project on the human rights of the local San people of Namibia and Botswana, and to strengthen the role of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise to be able to properly conduct this investigation; and
- Support for the campaign of the Canadian Centre for Corporate Accountability and their petition calling for government action on mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation.



The Okavango Delta campaign has been an excellent example of collaboration with like-minded organizations at home and abroad and of advocating for human rights in solidarity with local organizations in Africa.

The Okavango Solidarity Group continues its advocacy with ongoing representation by members of GRAN's Mining Justice Watch Group.

Working with our Elected Federal Officials



The GRAN Advocacy Planning Team (previously known as “The Hill Team”) plays a key role in facilitating the building of relationships with MPs and in coordinating the timing of GRAN's participation in advocacy actions, whether launched by ourselves or by our partner organizations.

Several highlights of the year include:

- Collaborating with a coalition of partners, including Cooperation Canada, CanWaCH, Results, ONE, Global Citizen and others, to advocate for 1% of COVID spending to go towards support for a global recovery, with a focus on the April 19th 2021 Federal Budget;
- Coordination of GRAN involvement in *Hill Days*, an annual event organized by Cooperation Canada and CanWaCH, that took place during the week beginning February 7th 2022; and
- Facilitation of the process for selecting one all-of-GRAN advocacy campaign for the 2021/22 GRAN advocacy year.

GRAN Website

GRAN's website is as close as we get to having an "office", a place where the public can drop in and visit and GRAN members can stop by to pick up resources or leave us a message. Our website is filled with information about who we are, what we care about and the work we are undertaking.

We encourage all GRANs to pay a visit to our website if you have not done so recently. There is so much to explore – news articles, videos, upcoming webinars and more. Under the "CAMPAIGNS" tab you will find a wealth of information to help you learn more about each of GRAN's present and past campaigns for human rights. GRAN groups will wish to explore the [Advocacy Toolbox](#) for resources to help you represent GRAN in your communities and advocacy work. Particularly worth regular visits are the [Take Action](#) button at the bottom of the GRAN home page and the [Learning Events](#) page, as information on these pages changes frequently. You can also scroll down to the bottom of any page on the site to read recent news stories and see what's current on the GRAN Twitter feed. Anyone new to GRAN can sign up on the [Get Involved](#) page to have GRAN news and action messages sent directly to their inbox. We are proud of our website and encourage frequent visits!

If your local GRAN group would like to schedule a website "tour" during one of your regular meetings, the GRAN Web Team would be happy to join you via Zoom. You can contact us [here](#).

Treasurer's Message and Financial Report

A huge thank you to all who supported the Grandmothers Advocacy Network this year. GRAN neither seeks nor receives external funding, so the support we receive from our members is critical to our operations. And we know individual GRANs support the organization in many ways, from covering printing costs and postage stamps, to direct financial contributions. Many GRANs supported the organization this past year with donations on "Giving Tuesday". And while our revenues were down this year, so were our expenses, leaving us in a positive balance at year end (see attached Annual Financial Statement).

Just a reminder that a lovely way to honour someone on a special occasion is through a tribute donation to GRAN. On the GRAN web site, click on [DONATE](#) in the upper right corner and scroll down to [DONATIONS AS GIFTS](#). E-transfers, cheques, or credit cards via Pay Pal are all gratefully accepted.

GRAN Annual Financial Statement for Year Ending March 31, 2022

Balance Beginning Fiscal 2021/22		\$23,141*
REVENUE 2021/22		
General Donations	1,736	
Tuesday Giving Campaign	1,545	
February Campaign Donations	700	
Donations as Gifts	300	
	Total	\$4,191
EXPENSES 2020/21		
Conference Calls	492	
Website Hosting, Support, Action Network	2,843	
Organizational Memberships	850	
Meetings/Conference/Working Groups/Face-to-Face	404	
Training/Learning Events	0	
Postage/Office Supplies	250	
Archives	0	
Miscellaneous	172	
	Total	\$5,010
NET INCOME (LOSS) 2021/22		- \$819

Balance End of Fiscal 2021/22		\$22,322*
<i>*Does not include \$4404 surplus from 2018 Hello Friends</i>		

Prepared by Mary Jane Sterne GRAN Financial Assistant