



Visiting Your MP

You don't have to be an expert or a political activist to visit your MP. The idea may seem daunting to many of us at first. But remember, what we want to do is help MPs understand GRAN's concerns regarding the situation of the African grandmothers and the young people in their care, and to share with them what actions we are asking of our government. Your MP is a busy person and may not know a great deal about GRAN so that is why it is important for you to be ready to explain who we are and what we do.

The goal of your meeting will be to have a conversation with your MP about the importance of the issue you are addressing.

After making your appointment with your MP, take some time to go online to do some research on their background, the Parliamentary Committees and actions they have participated in, recent speeches, press releases and any other information that might be available to help you make a positive connection with your MP when you meet.

Also, be sure to do some research on the GRAN issue you have chosen to highlight. There may be a backgrounder on our website. It is also useful to check websites of our partners for more information.

Try to establish beforehand, when you speak to the office staff, how much time you will have for the appointment. This will help you prioritize the points you would like to make. It can be useful to e-mail your MP and give him or her a short list of the issues you plan to address.

Don't feel you have to go alone. Your MP will be used to meeting with more than one person. Two, three or even four is just fine. It will help if you get together before you go so that you can review what you want to say. Different people might take different questions.

The Day Arrives

1. Be sure to arrive a bit early (whether on Zoom or in person).
2. Introduce yourself and thank your MP for taking time to meet with you. Try to comment on some positive action they have taken recently.
3. Introduce GRAN. If the MP is not familiar with GRAN, explain who we are and what our main areas of focus are. Be sure to take a GRAN brochure.

4. If your MP is a member of the party in power, thank them for some of the recent actions of the government that are related to the issue you are raising.
5. Explain why you asked for the meeting. This is where you will focus on the GRAN issues you wish to discuss. Be prepared with a set of questions to ask after you have finished your explanation.
6. Thank your MP for meeting with you and listening to your concerns and give them any documents you have brought to leave with them. If your MP has offered to find out more about any of your concerns, establish how he or she is going to contact you or if it would be better if you contacted them.

A Few Hints

- Stay calm. Take your time and think before you respond.
- Experienced MPs may try to steer the conversation in another direction or talk about themselves. Respectfully bring the conversation back. An easy way to do that is to agree with their point and then simply say something like. “But getting back to the importance of”
- Be friendly and respectful but persistent.

Finally, don't forget to send a note thanking your MP for their time and interest. You can also take the opportunity to summarize the issues and any follow-up actions you discussed.

Helpful website addresses to access information on your MP:

- List of all members of Parliament, their contact info, membership in Committees:
<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Members/en>
- Find your federal riding by postal code:
<http://www.elections.ca/scripts/vis/FindED?L=e&PAGEID=20>