



Advocating for the human rights of older women
Défense des droits de la personne des femmes âgées

An Orientation for New Members

Welcome to GRAN!

We are so glad you are joining our national social justice network! We are volunteers from across Canada working together to influence policy change and stimulate effective action in Canada and internationally to protect the human rights of older women, children and youth, and gender-diverse persons.

We share a deep concern for the human rights and well-being of grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa and those in their care, as well as vulnerable and marginalized women in communities of the Global South. As our name suggests, GRAN is made up of a strong core of older women, but we welcome and value the partnership and efforts of all.

We hope this short orientation will be helpful to you as you begin your GRAN journey.



GRANs visit Uganda

What we do



GRAN participation at the United Nations

We **advocate** at the local, national, and international level in support of policies and programs that promote and protect the well-being and human rights of older women, children, youth and gender-diverse persons.

We **educate** to raise public awareness and invite engagement.

We **partner** with like-minded organizations to amplify our voices and increase our impact.

Principles that guide our advocacy

Age justice creates an inclusive society where the dignity and human rights of all are respected, no matter one's age. Age justice works for cultural and systemic change to address ageism and discrimination, marginalization, and economic inequities. Age justice seeks the well-being of all persons at all ages through equity, access, participation, and rights.



Climate March in Ottawa

Climate Justice The climate emergency disproportionately affects the disempowered and most marginalized across the world – the poor, the old, the very young, and women. Climate justice links human rights and development to achieve a human-centered approach, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable people and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its impacts equitably and fairly.

Economic Justice promotes equality, protects the planet, and ends poverty. It builds social cohesion and promotes the economic empowerment of women and marginalized groups. It supports the rights of all workers, offers social protection and ensures that livelihoods and planetary resources can be sustained.

Gender Justice is the full equality and equity among women, gender-diverse persons, and men in all spheres of life, resulting in equality in defining and shaping the policies, structures and decisions that affect lives of individuals and society as a whole.

Social Justice is the full participation and inclusion of all people in society, together with the promotion and protection of their legal, civil and human rights. The aim of social justice – to achieve a just and equitable society where all share in the prosperity of that just society -- is pursued by individuals and groups through collaborative social action.



At PRIDE parade in Toronto in support of the Global Fund

GRAN actions take many forms:

- Writing to and meeting with Members of Parliament, government Ministers and the Prime Minister
- Using social media to reach decision-makers and amplifying social media campaigns of partners
- Signing and circulating petitions
- Organizing public education events
- Submitting opinion pieces and Letters to the Editor to newspapers
- Attending rallies and peaceful demonstrations
- Organizing and participating in learning events, webinars, and conferences



GRAN members writing letters to MPs

GRAN groups

There are many different GRAN groups across the country. Some GRAN groups are completely independent, whereas others are in close association with other groups in their communities with similar goals. We celebrate and support all our different groups.

It is important to point out that GRAN is a separate organization from the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Because the two organizations share a common history, including a special concern for the grandmothers of sub-Saharan Africa, many of us are involved with both organizations.



A GRAN group showing their support for the Orange Campaign



At PRIDE Toronto in support of the Global Fund

Regional Leaders provide support and communicate with GRANs in designated areas across the country: Victoria/Vancouver Island, Greater Vancouver, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario South-SW, Greater Toronto, Ontario SE, Ottawa-Gatineau, Montreal/Quebec, and the Atlantic region.

If there isn't a GRAN group in your area, you can start one! It can be as simple as you like. You can form a group by just getting together with one or two friends, reading about the issues in our monthly newsletter, the *GRAN Update*, and on our website www.grandmothersadvocacy.org, discussing them, and then participating in simple actions such as signing a petition or writing a letter. If you do start a new group, please contact us and let us know!

Some of our members don't have a group nearby but are active as individuals – supported by our Watch Groups, Campaign Teams, and Advocacy Planning Team. Our website and our monthly newsletter provide backgrounders, actions, and opportunities to participate in [Learning Events](#).

GRAN's organization

GRAN's national organizational structure consists of our Steering Committee, Regional Leaders, Watch Groups, Advocacy Planning Team, and Coordinating Team.

Steering Committee: The Steering Committee is our major decision-making body and includes our Regional Leaders, Co-Chairs of Watch Groups and Coordinating Team. The Steering Committee communicates via a monthly Zoom meeting.

Regional Leaders: The Regional Leaders keep in touch with and act as the 'go to' advocacy resource for GRAN groups and members across the country. They represent their regions on the Steering Committee.

Watch Groups: Our Watch Groups research and develop expertise in a number of issue areas. Right now we have Watch Groups on health, education, climate and mining justice. They propose actions and campaigns and work with like-minded civil society organizations. Any interested GRAN member is welcome to take part in a Watch Group.

Advocacy Planning Team provides strategic direction, forward planning and advice especially related to advocacy with decision-makers in parliament. They also support skills development of members and manage the process of identifying all-of-GRAN campaigns. They often represent GRAN at national meetings of civil society organizations.

Coordinating Team consists of 6-8 members from all across Canada. They support the Steering Committee by providing administrative support, budgets and website management. The Coordinating Team keeps information flowing between the Watch Groups, Steering Committee, and Advocacy Planning Team.

Communications

We communicate with members across the country by means of our monthly newsletter, the *GRAN Update*. The GRAN website www.grandmothersadvocacy.org/ is an invaluable source of information on our issues and ongoing [actions](#). In addition, several times each month, messages will be sent to you via email that will give you the latest news from GRAN or will ask you to take action on one of our issues. Once you sign up to be a member, you will start receiving the newsletter and our emails.

So many benefits to being an active GRAN member!



We hope as you get more involved in GRAN you will experience many benefits. As one member shared, ***"I have found that being involved has given new meaning to my life since I retired from the working world. I have really enjoyed learning so many new things – important things like how Parliament works and the rights of older women in sub-Saharan Africa. I have really enjoyed the amazing women I have met along the way whom I now count as my friends. They have always been supportive and encouraging and I hope you have the same experience."***



At a national Hello Friends! conference

We also have so much fun together, and this is at the same time as making the world a better place. Who could beat that!

If you haven't signed up, you can visit our website to do so: <https://grandmothersadvocacy.org/ways-get-involved> or send us an email at info@grandmothersadvocacy.org .

Welcome to GRAN!