

2006-2011

A Story Evolving



Advocacy in the Canadian
Grandmothers to
Grandmothers Movement

The National Advocacy Committee of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign
Comité d'action national de la campagne de grands-mères à grands-mères



Email: grandmothersadvocacy@gmail.com
Web Site: www.grandmotherscampaign.org (Click on ADVOCACY)

This document was prepared by
Peggy Edwards and Kathleen Wallace-Deering,
the founding co-chairs of NAC,
with Linda Watson,
an original member of NAC's Leadership Team

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Other documents referenced in *A Story Evolving*
are on file with the National Advocacy Committee

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INTRODUCTION

by

Peggy Edwards, Founding Co-Chair

Grandmothers in Africa and Canada are making a difference—in the future of Africa’s next generation, the conscience of Canadians and the way that older women are seen and heard as effective advocates for social justice. This document demonstrates this by describing the first five years of advocacy in the Canadian Grandmothers to Grandmothers movement. It is designed to:

- ❖ *document* the formation and history to date of the national advocacy movement in Canada, which is associated with the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, guided by the Stephen Lewis Foundation
- ❖ *celebrate* our accomplishments and honour the thousands of women across Canada who are part of this unique and impressive movement
- ❖ *record* the building blocks and lessons learned that helped to build the advocacy movement, and continue to guide our work
- ❖ *encourage* reflection and input as we move ahead.

To address these purposes, this document provides a chronological history of the growth of a unique movement. It also represents a rare opportunity for a grassroots volunteer organization to celebrate 5 years of growth and learning by sharing its beginnings, the building blocks that nurtured its growth and some of the lessons learned along the way.

It is a story of empowerment, learning and hard slogging but also one of experience, wisdom, love, passion, friendship and good humour—traits that older women bring to the practice of advocacy in civil society.

As you read the document, there are a couple of “wording” details to keep in mind:

- ❖ We speak primarily of “grandmothers” but recognize and include the participation and contribution of “grand-others”—women and men of all ages who are not grandmothers themselves but actively work to support the cause.
- ❖ The history of advocacy in the Grandmothers’ movement centres on the National Advocacy Committee (NAC), which has gone through a number of name changes. NASC and NAC are primarily used throughout the text, according to the different time periods described.

This document is a legacy from Kathleen Wallace Deering, the other founding Co-chair of NAC, who is a lifelong activist for social justice with a penchant for recording history and detail. Thank you, Kathleen.

It is titled “A Story Evolving” because there remains much more to do. Grandmothers and grand-others

in Canada and Africa will continue to make our voices heard in the battle to turn the tide of HIV and AIDS in Africa.

The National Advocacy Committee welcomes your feedback.

- ❖ What have you learned in reading about this evolving story?
- ❖ How has your involvement in advocacy that supports African grandmothers and the vulnerable children and youth in their care affected you?
- ❖ How can we effectively use the building blocks that have led us to this point?
- ❖ Are there other key learnings that we should include?
- ❖ What new building blocks are emerging?

NAC looks forward to hearing from you. Please write to us at grandmothersadvocacy@gmail.com

BUILDING BLOCKS OF A NATIONAL MOVEMENT

1. Set a focus on solidarity and the human face of AIDS.

On the eve of International Women's Day (March 8, 2006), the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) officially launched the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign. It called on Canadian women to support African grandmothers raising children and young people who had been orphaned by AIDS. The campaign took root in August 2006 at the Grandmothers Gathering, when the SLF brought 100 grandmothers from sub-Saharan Africa to meet with 200 Canadian grandmothers. The Toronto Gathering, which was inspired by Ilana Landsberg-Lewis, Executive Director of the SLF, put a human face on the complex global issue of HIV/AIDS. Canadians came to know the human face of HIV/AIDS in Africa as the faces of devastated but resilient grandmothers and the vulnerable children in their care. An immediate heart-to-heart bond of solidarity was established, and this remains a persistent, underlying value in the years to come.



Within months, the number of grandmother groups mushroomed and they started to raise funds for grandmother projects funded and overseen by the SLF. At the same time, some individuals were thinking about the activist message so clearly stated in the Toronto Statement, which had come out of the Gathering. How could grandmothers in Canada join their voices with their sisters in Africa to make governments accountable for the rights and needs of women and children in the face of the HIV/AIDS pandemic?

2. Look to a visionary leader to provide inspiration and guidance.

Movements for social justice often begin by rallying around a visionary leader. Many of the women who joined the Grandmothers movement had read Stephen Lewis's book *Race Against Time*, or heard the chapters read on the CBC Radio Ideas series in the fall of 2005. Others had been inspired by his passion and talks in their communities.



When the *Greater Van Gogos* Resource Team (the umbrella group for grandmother groups in the Vancouver area), coordinated by Barbara Clay, met with Stephen on November 16, 2006, they asked him if he supported grandmothers undertaking advocacy activities to address the situation and how they might best go about this work. Stephen responded by saying that it would be "powerful and desirable" for autonomous grandmother groups to do advocacy and "excellent" for them to meet with MPs. He also made it clear that while the SLF would be in agreement with this work, as a charitable foundation the SLF could not exceed government imposed limits on direct advocacy actions (i.e. 10% of budgetary and time allotments).

Stephen continues to provide direction to the National Advocacy Committee through annual meetings and phone conversations when needed.

3. Start in one region, then go national.

Following the meeting with Stephen, the *Greater Van Gogos* mandated Kathleen Wallace-Deering to convene a regional Advocacy Committee and to invite grandmother groups to identify someone to attend meetings as an advocacy representative for their group. From the first time they met in February 2007, the regular monthly meetings of the *Greater Van Gogos* Advocacy Committee were inspiring and energizing, and provided local groups with the direction, information and resources they needed to engage members in advocacy activities. This early organization of advocacy reps became a model for the development of networks in other parts of the country and has ensured a continuing high level of participation in advocacy activities in the Vancouver region.

In one of the first meetings with a local MP, members of the *Greater Van Gogos* learned about an upcoming review of Canada's Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR) and the suggestion was made that the grandmothers apply to appear as a witness. With the help of Mary Anna Beer (who was serving as an advisor to the SLF's Grandmothers Campaign), the Vancouver grandmothers identified Peggy Edwards, an experienced Ottawa-based activist and co-founder of the *One World Grannies*, as someone who could appear before the Parliamentary Committee. As it turned out, the Parliamentary Committee denied the application for the grandmothers to appear because the advocacy network was not yet recognized as "a significant national organization," but the link between the Greater Van Gogos Advocacy Committee and Peggy proved vital to the growth of a national network. On March 26, 2007, Peggy traveled to Vancouver and met with the newly formed *Greater Van Gogos* Regional Advocacy Committee. They shared their common vision of developing a national advocacy network in order to maximize political impact through coordinated nation-wide actions.



A conference call was convened on April 25, 2007 with Peggy Edwards (*One World Grannies*, Ottawa), Kathleen Wallace-Deering (*Greater Van Gogos*, Vancouver), Bev LeFrancois (*Oomamas*, Burlington, ON), Julie Coultas (SLF Grandmothers Campaign coordinator) and Mary Anna Beer. The main purposes of the call were to identify women across Canada who might be willing to participate in a national advocacy network, and to discuss mechanisms for communication and decision-making. Mary Anna Beer recommended women from grandmother groups across the country. She and Julie agreed to serve as ex-officio members of this steering committee.



Following contact with those whose names were provided by Mary Anna, the National Advocacy Steering Committee (NASC) was established, with regional representation from British Columbia to Nova Scotia. The first teleconference meeting call was held on May 23, 2007. The SLF financially supported these vital calls

Peggy Edwards and Kathleen Wallace-Deering were asked to serve as interim co-chairs for NASC, which took as its mandate the commitment to provide guidance and coordination for advocacy efforts by grandmother groups across Canada.

4. Establish principles for working together.

Committee discussions in the first months focused not only on what accomplishments were intended but also on how members would work together. There was agreement that how individuals treated each other, and the expectations held for self and others, would be critical to recruiting and sustaining volunteers. Certain key phrases began to surface in these discussions that were to become part of the working vocabulary of the national committee. As it was expressed at the time:

- ❖ **We're trying to build a movement not a bureaucracy:** we're committed to a non-hierarchical model and to making decisions by consensus, while trying to work efficiently and effectively. We only want as much organizational structure as is needed and helpful for our work together. We Invite others to contribute their skills, passion and time to help shape and build the movement, and we appreciate the contributions of everyone.
- ❖ **No guilt:** we all have other commitments/responsibilities/demands which sometimes prevent us from doing as much as we might have said we would. While deeply committed to the importance of the work, we'll try to find ways of maintaining the momentum without burning ourselves out and without heaping guilt upon ourselves, e.g. having "partners" for every function/role; giving one another permission to back out on short notice to care for sick parents or grandchildren, for example.
- ❖ **Stay focused on what matters:** we're encouraging one another to "check our egos at the door" and to stay focused on what matters: working together as best we can to be effective in our advocacy work, in solidarity with African grandmothers caring for children orphaned by HIV and AIDS.
- ❖ **This is supposed to be fun:** we're not only building a movement, we're also building affirming, positive relationships which will help us stay in for the long haul. Our interaction needs to be characterized by mutual respect and appreciation.

5. Cultivate primary relationships.

From the beginning, the SLF supported the national advocacy network by providing the use of a conference line, by suggesting names of participants, and by enabling staff to participate on the monthly calls. Over the years, the emerging national advocacy campaign name changed twice, with each change reflecting an evolution in understanding of how advocacy could be part of the larger Grandmothers Campaign without jeopardizing the charitable status of the SLF. Beginning in early 2008, NASC had begun to call itself "Canadian Grandmothers for Africa: A National Advocacy Network" and was taking steps to develop its own "brand".

On July 23, 2008 Ilana sent an enthusiastic email to the NASC to say that "It is very clear to all of us at the SLF that awareness-raising, fundraising and advocacy are all necessary" and to share new legal advice indicating that it wasn't necessary for advocacy to be done under the auspices of a separate organization. She expressed her "hope this will be a new chapter which makes the Grandmothers' Campaign the three-dimensional and effective movement that it is." In a later teleconference call on August 28th, Ilana proposed a change of name to "National Advocacy Committee of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign" (NAC, for short).



Assured that free use of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign name and logo was now possible, NASC changed the name to NAC and developed a logo in French and English that included the G2G Campaign circle.

6. Focus on a limited number of key issues that fit defined criteria for action.

At the November 2006 meeting, Stephen named three issues, which became the focus of the movement's advocacy work:

- ❖ Canada's contribution to the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- ❖ Canada's unfulfilled promise to provide 0.7% of Gross National Income to official development assistance
- ❖ The need to get low-cost generic drugs from Canada to Africa by fixing Canada's Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR)

Early on, NASC realized the importance of establishing clear criteria for selecting issues as a critical way of avoiding "mission drift". In June 2007, NASC established the following criteria for selecting advocacy issues:

- ❖ The issue is of vital importance to the well-being of African grandmothers in their task of caring

for their AIDS-orphaned grandchildren. Our advocacy work in Canada is rooted in the experience of and gives voice to grandmothers in Africa.

- ❖ The issue is consistent with and complements the work of the Stephen Lewis Foundation (the June 07 version listed additional organizations in order to protect the charitable status of the SLF, but was changed in September 2010 to reflect the unique relationship of NAC to the SLF)
- ❖ There are opportunities for collaboration with other credible NGOs at the international, national and/or local level.
- ❖ There are signs that it is a politically opportune time to pursue a particular advocacy point and have an impact.
- ❖ We have access to expertise necessary for credible and effective advocacy.
- ❖ We have the capacity to provide resources to members in our network so that they can take action.



At the suggestion of many grandmothers from across Canada and from Africa, NAC decided in 2009 to take on education as a fourth advocacy issue. The Education Working Group prepared a variety of excellent resource materials, including a kit of information for use in the 2010 Stride to Turn the Tide Walk on the theme of “education for all”. In recent months they have carefully framed the issue to ensure that the “asks” and resource materials place even greater emphasis on the unique relationship with grandmothers and orphaned children in Africa and the SLF projects involving education and AIDS. The group adopted a new name: ELLSA—Education and Lifelong Learning in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In a meeting in September 2010, Stephen brought members of the Leadership Team up to speed on hopeful early indications of the successful use of microbicides and vaccines, and Dr. Julio Montaner's landmark “treatment as prevention” research. The National Advocacy Committee is now pursuing these ideas as potential advocacy issues under the “prevention” umbrella.

7. Partner with credible organizations that share common goals.

When asked where reliable information about the priority issues could be found, Stephen advised contacting credible organizations such as the Global Treatment Access Group (GTAG), the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and Kairos. The *Greater Van Gogos* contacted GTAG and were soon represented by a “grandmother guest” on GTAG conference calls. They also turned to Michael O’Connor, at that time Executive Director of the International Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD), and to Richard Elliott, Executive Director of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, for assistance in editing their first letters to the Prime Minister.

8. Show strength with visible public demonstrations.

On September 9, 2007 grandmother groups in the Ottawa/Gatineau Region staged a march and rally on Parliament Hill. Participating guests included Elizabeth Mataka, the new UN Special Envoy for AIDS, two grandmothers from Africa, Ilana Landsberg-Lewis, groups from across Ontario and Western Quebec carrying banners, representatives from local First Nations and over 500 members of the public of all ages. There was extensive media coverage of the event. The Ottawa Call to Action (an abbreviated and updated form



of the Toronto Statement issued at the first Grandmothers Gathering in 2006) became an inspirational document used again and again when advocates come together to remember their commitments in the context of the Campaign.

This event provided a prototype for coast-to-coast weekend events to follow in September of 2008, June of 2009 and June 2010. It also laid the foundation for the strong advocacy presence of Ottawa/Gatineau grandmothers on the Hill for the CAMR Campaign from Oct. 2009 through to March 2011, and the formation of the National Advocacy Committee's Hill Team.

9. Complement work in local constituencies by building a presence in Ottawa on the doorstep of the federal government.



In the first three years, grandmother/grand-other advocates primarily saw themselves as a grassroots movement that could complement advocacy being done on Parliament Hill by the senior professional staff of NGO partners (such as the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network). However, with the formation of the "Hill Team" in early 2010 it became possible for members of the advocacy network to visit MPs and Senators on the Hill, as well as in their local constituencies. While volunteer members of local grandmothers groups

could engage with elected representatives in their ridings, the Hill Team was trained and equipped to attend special events and meet with parliamentarians while the Houses were in session. This two-pronged effort proved to be highly successful, with the local grassroots presence of grandmothers in their home communities coast-to-coast lending credibility to advocacy activities of the Hill Team in Ottawa. Pat Evans (Capital Grannies) took on the lead role of the inaugural Hill Team, which was made up of experienced grandmothers from the Ottawa /Gatineau Region some whom spoke both English and French.

10. Deliver the right information to the right desk at the right time.

In the fall of 2007, a webcast sponsored by the Global Treatment Access Group (GTAG) featured Amanda Sussman, author of *The Art of the Possible: A Handbook for Political Activism*. Among other items related to the process and timing for influencing Canadian government policy decisions, Sussman suggested that being a successful advocate “means that our information is on the right table, before the right people at the right time.” This sound advice related to two audiences: decision makers in influential organizations and government, and the grandmothers and grand-others in grassroots groups across the country.

Communicating within the grandmother network was accomplished in four ways:

Information on the web.

In the last months of 2007, the SLF gave the go ahead for developing a distinct advocacy section on the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign website. The content, initially developed by Linda Watson and Peggy Edwards, detailed expectations of local groups, job descriptions for local Advocacy Representatives and Cluster Leaders, extensive information on the main advocacy issues and a glossary of terms.

For the first time, NASC had a bridge into the lives and experience of grandmothers coast-to-coast who wanted to better understand advocacy and how it complemented the work they were already doing. The advocacy content was first posted to the web by SLF staff in February of 2008, and has been updated regularly by Linda and the NASC team since then.

The establishment of an organized personal two-way communication system with the grassroots. NASC agreed that its membership would include representatives from geographic Clusters across the country. Each Cluster Leader would have an “Alternate” to partner with and



take responsibility for communicating with a set number of local groups in their Cluster. Each local group would be encouraged to name an Advocacy Representative who would communicate with her Cluster Leader—passing information from NASC to members in local groups, and bringing ideas or concerns back to NASC through the Cluster Leader.

A brief, readable monthly newsletter for the grassroots. The Update, NASC’s monthly national advocacy newsletter, originated with a regional newsletter undertaken by Linda Watson, co-founder of *Grands 'n' More Winnipeg*, who was serving as the Alternate Cluster Leader for the Prairie Region. Linda developed the regional newsletter to convey highlights from the monthly NASC conference calls to Advocacy Representatives she and Prairie Cluster Leader Enid Butler had recruited in October of 2007.

Other regional cluster leaders immediately recognized the value of such a newsletter, and the first national Update was sent out after the NASC call on December 12, 2007. It was well received and became an increasingly effective communication vehicle for reporting, issuing action calls and resourcing the grassroots. The Update was distributed by email to local Advocacy Representatives who were encouraged to forward it to



interested members of their groups by email. Where there was resistance to the use of electronic communication, Advocacy Representatives got creative, and began printing out the document for distribution and/or reading aloud at group meetings. This practice is still used, even though the use of email and web-driven communications is now enabled by better technologies and highly accepted at the grassroots. Members state that they like the Update because it is restricted to 2 or 3 pages (with links to further information) and because it is written in clear upbeat language.

A bi-annual advocacy activities timeline. Twice a year, NASC provides grandmother groups with a one-page calendar of advocacy events and actions in the coming six months. The plan is built around calendars guiding government action and key national and international events. From its introduction and first use in March 2008, Advocacy Representatives reported that the Advocacy Action Timeline was a useful tool when it came to explaining the advocacy program, planning local and regional activities, and recruiting women to participate.

An in-depth reporting of news and developments for members of NAC. Building on a recommendation first made by Dariel Bateman, a Consent Agenda was introduced to be circulated in advance of each monthly conference call. It was intended, as the first issue described, to ensure that “in one simple step we could consent to adopting minutes, receive financial updates and mini reports, and acknowledge dates for Coming Events, etc.” The first issue filled three pages: the April 2011 edition ran to 9 pages of reporting plus 11 pages of

appendices. In other words, it became a monthly advocacy news magazine with actual newspaper articles, letters and longer reports incorporated along with more focussed reporting. As the Consent Agenda expanded in depth and breadth, so did the “buy-in” and knowledge base of the members of NAC.

11. Develop a strategic plan that spells out vision, mission, values and objectives.

In November 2007, NASC hired Kristen Ostling to help the organization develop a five-year strategic plan that would guide the work until the end of 2012. Following extensive preparatory work, the following NASC members met with Kristen in February 2008 in Ottawa: Kathleen Wallace-Deering (Co-Chair), Peggy Edwards (Co-Chair), Darrel Bateman (*Grandmothers Calgary*, AB), Linda Watson (*Grands 'n' More Winnipeg*, MB), Gillian Sandeman (*Grandmothers Together*, ON), Andrea Beal (*GRAN-Aurora*, ON), and Julie Coultas (Grandmothers Campaign Coordinator).



NASC members were sent the completed draft strategic plan and then were phoned individually to garner their input and build ownership for the proposed directions. The Cluster Leaders in turn canvassed the local Advocacy Representatives. The plan was also sent to Ilana Landsberg-Lewis and Stephen Lewis for their feedback. Stephen responded by saying, “The advocacy strategy embraced by the grandmother's groups is informed, compelling and focused. Bravo! It's an excellent compendium of what our government should be doing and is not doing. More, the advocacy is rooted in African experience on the ground—what could be better? These Canadian

grandmothers are a formidable force. Ignore them at your peril.”

Key components included:

Vision: Our vision is dignity for the present and hope for the future of grandmothers and AIDS orphans in Africa.

Mission: The mission of the *Canadian Grandmothers for Africa: A National Advocacy Network* is to advocate in meaningful and strategic ways for the grandmothers of Africa and the AIDS orphans in their care.

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, honesty, empathy, caring sharing and compassion.
- ❖ **Social justice** is about securing human rights, gender equality, fair distribution of resources, a healthy planet, opportunities for full participation in social, educational and economic activities and a space for the human spirit to thrive.

- ❖ **Shared purpose** describes the unique relationship between Canadian and African grandmothers and our commitment to listen to and voice their concerns.

Internal Network Objectives include:

- ❖ Mobilize 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 and AIDS orphans.
- ❖ Strengthen the advocacy capacity of grandmothers groups across Canada by providing timely and effective resources, tools, learning experiences and opportunities to engage in advocacy work.
- ❖ Ensure the long-term sustainability of our advocacy network by building participatory governance structures and maintaining a nimble, accessible and adequately resourced advocacy organization.

12. Build leadership into the structure, nurture emerging leaders and pass on leadership roles.

The meeting of a strategic planning group in February 2008 benefited the advocacy committee to such a degree that it was agreed that the same individuals would meet again in October of 2008 as an interim executive committee. This development allowed NAC to move forward, liaise with partners and consult about new initiatives in the intervals between monthly calls. Over the next few years, Andrea Beal (*GranAurora*, ON), Marilyn Coolen (*Bay Grandmothers*, NS), and Julie Gleadow (*Sunshine Coast Grandmothers and Grand-others*, BC) joined the NAC Leadership Team.

The newly developed governance model affirmed a process for leadership succession. Andrea Beal stepped into the role of NAC Co-chair with the retirement of Peggy Edwards from the position of Co-Chair in June 2010. Because of the critical role of the new Hill Team, Pat Evans (Hill Team Coordinator) was asked to join the Leadership Team in March 2011. As of June 2011, Kathleen Wallace-Deering assumes the role of past Co-chair and Marilyn Coolen becomes the Co-Chair (with Andrea Beal). Within the larger NAC structure, the recruitment of new members is a priority.

Leaders are sought to represent gaps in regional/cluster representation and in specific issue areas. Increasingly, NAC is recruiting members from local groups to sit on issue specific working groups. They bring both expertise and the voice of the grassroots to advocacy policies and recommendations at the national level.

13. Think in terms of a Ladder of Engagement.

Thinking of advocacy involvement in terms of a Ladder of Engagement provided us with a way of talking about activity levels in advocacy for individuals and groups. The “Ubuntu” value came into play here, as members sought to honour each other’s individuality and humanity. Someone deeply invested in fundraising efforts, for example, or someone with health problems in the family might engage in advocacy at a relatively minimal level. Someone else, with more free time, or with experience in advocacy in another context, might be ready to commit to significant levels of involvement. This model allowed a way to articulate sincere respect for differences in interest and availability.

A first step on the advocacy ladder could be signing a petition or a pre-written postcard to an MP. A different step on the ladder could involve joining NAC and contributing to planning and decision-making at that level. Both are examples of valid advocacy engagement. The Ladder of Engagement also reminded us that while it is possible, with time perhaps, to move higher in terms of advocacy engagement, it is also possible to step down a rung or two—or even off the ladder altogether for a time—depending upon time availability and personal circumstances. Engagement in advocacy is not an all or nothing thing.

Advocacy—Granny Style was a four page publication developed to introduce inquirers to the advocacy work of the Grandmothers Campaign. It also introduced many to the Ladder of Engagement and became a vital document establishing the legitimacy of the work and its scope.



14. Mobilize and equip the grassroots to act.

NASC's first full-fledged cross-Canada advocacy campaign took the form of a national petition calling on Canada's parliament to:

- 1) Immediately set a timetable to meet, by 2015, its 40 year old promise to contribute 0.7% of our Gross National Income to development assistance; and
- 2) Contribute our fair share to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, i.e. 5% of the funding needed for each of the next 5 years; and
- 3) Make the legislative changes necessary for Canada's Access to Medicines Regime to facilitate the immediate and sustainable flow of lower-cost generic medicines to developing countries.



Ruth Elliott, a member of *Grandmothers of Alberta for a New Generation* (GANG) in Edmonton, assumed the role of point person on NAC for the development of the materials and submission of the petition. Myrtle Blinn (*Grandmas AIDing Grandmas* in Ottawa) took on the task of packaging and delivering the completed petition forms to the Clerk of Petitions and MPs who requested them. Peggy Edwards worked with a consultant in Ottawa to draw up a communications plan and carry out a media conference with MPs from three parties.

The petition campaign was highly successful: it was signed by nearly 33,000 Canadians (from coast to coast) and presented in the House of Commons by twelve members of parliament from all political parties. Visits from Ottawa/Gatineau area grandmothers to MPs and Senators

raised the profile and awareness of the grandmothers' movement on Parliament Hill and opened the door to continuing relationships with some key public officials.

The petition campaign was very effective in engaging and nurturing grandmothers in advocacy at the grassroots level. It provided a simple, obvious, non-threatening action with significance, and became a rite of passage for many. Signing the petition became the first step on the Ladder of Engagement, and taking the petition to collect signatures or sitting at an advocacy display table with the petition became "the next step". Within months many hundreds of women had taken their first advocacy steps.

The national petition campaign provided us with many new lessons learned and confirmed others, including the following:

- ❖ One of the best ways to influence politicians is to engage the public in your cause
- ❖ A national campaign must be conducted in both English and French
- ❖ Be multi-partisan in your approach; invite and enable members of parliament from all parties to support your cause (and take their photographs when they sign)
- ❖ Stress the humanitarian reasons for supporting your cause
- ❖ Pay attention to parliamentary procedures and details, and follow the rules of process (when in doubt, ask!)
- ❖ Give grassroots members the tools they need to explain the "asks" to their neighbours and friends, as well as to politicians and influencers in the community
- ❖ Always have one simple advocacy action "on the go" that will engage large numbers of grandmothers at the grassroots (e.g., a petition, postcards or an online "sign on" campaign)

15. Invite high profile champions to join the cause.

As the signed petition pages began to come in by the hundreds, members of NASC began to understand that the public voice was hugely significant and that this voice could be amplified by identifying and contacting prominent Canadians across the country to secure their signatures on the petition and/or on a letter to the Prime Minister intended to be released at the same time as the petition. A comprehensive appeal was made to attract signatures from prominent Canadians in the arts, medicine and politics, including Margaret Atwood, Sally Armstrong, James Orbinski, David Suzuki, Tracy Dahl, and Senator Romeo Dallaire. In the end 150 well-known, influential individuals from all walks of Canadian life, including several Order of Canada recipients, signed NAC's *Open Letter to the Prime Minister*, issued not only to Mr. Harper but also to national media. The strategy of recruiting and nurturing high profile champions remains a tried and true advocacy strategy.

In 2011, the grandmothers were instrumental in another effort to engage champions in the cause. Rap singer K'naan became a colleague and champion of the cause when he publicly declared his support for the Grandmothers Campaign and the need to export affordable medicines to sub-Saharan Africa. As part of the CAMR campaign to garner and show support for Bill C-393 in a variety of



different constituencies, (e.g. scientists and medical researchers), the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network drafted a Faith Leader's Letter, and asked NAC to take the lead in collecting signatures from faith leaders. NAC's ability to quickly get over 80 signatories on the letter was indicative of the ability of grandmothers to call on their network. It also suggests that a number of grandmother/grand-other activists are either themselves members of faith communities and/or have been supported in their larger work by faith communities.

16. Be prepared for elections.

When talk of a federal election in 2008 surfaced in the media, NASC established a small team to begin development of resources for use by the grassroots. When the announcement came, this team and the co-chairs in particular went into high gear to produce materials grandmother and grand-other advocates could use to engage meaningfully with candidates and each other to ensure NAC issues got a hearing. The decision was made to hit all three items on the national petition: namely, the Global Fund, official development aid and reforming Canada's Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR). The advocacy network had passion and knowledge relating to each of these items. Efforts were made at the time to track candidate visits in local ridings but experience proved that getting advocates to report back was a greater challenge than getting them to visit candidates in the first place!

That said, this election became another rite of passage for many, as it was the first time ever in their lives that they had talked to an MP or other electoral candidate. The resources provided to support this kind of engagement (in English and in French) led to the evolution of basic types of materials that would provide the foundation for future elections (i.e. in 2011) including: instructions on how best to conduct meetings with candidates, hand-out information cards to give to candidates at the door or elsewhere, leave-behind documents for multiple venues, backgrounder documents of more depth, and prompt sheets to guide questioning of candidates in the context of call-in shows or other public events. The revelation for some grandmother advocates that they knew more than an established MP about the topics they wanted to discuss instilled confidence and readiness to do more.

17. Convene face-to face meetings of cross-national participants.



The first ever face-to-face meeting of members of the National Advocacy Committee, *Hello Friends*, took place on the George Brown Campus in Toronto on June 22-23, 2010. It was intensely meaningful, as NAC members were joined by SLF staff and two African Grandmothers, Sipihwe Hlope and Mama Darlina. Not only did delegates receive input from excellent speakers and find opportunity to brainstorm on goals and objectives together, they also recorded footage relating to Bill C-393 to amend CAMR that became the content of NAC's first

advocacy video, published on YouTube as: “Grandmothers to Grandmothers-Get Drugs to Africa!” There was consensus that this kind of face-to-face meeting was important for building relationships and providing the inspiration and education needed to sustain a highly-dedicated corps of volunteer leaders. NAC will seek to meet again in 2012.

Immediately after the NAC meeting, on June 24-25, 2010, NAC jointly hosted with the Ontario Regional Resource Group (ORRG), a full-scale conference entitled *GranAfriCan: Grandmothers’ Activism in Africa and Canada: Turning the Tide of HIV and AIDS in Africa*. More than 300 grandmothers and grand-thers attended stimulating plenary sessions, informative workshops, and sessions to set directions for future activism. Speakers included Stephen Lewis, Ilana Landsberg-Lewis, Aissatou Diajhaté (Director of Programs for the SLF), Sipihwe Hlope (African grandmother, the head of SWAPOL, an HIV/AIDS activist group in Swaziland), Mama Darlina (African grandmother working with the Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa), Dr. Karen Mundy (chair of the Canadian Global Campaign for Education) and Michael O’Connor (on staff with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria).



Good counsel from people like Alexa McDonough, at and before the events in June, helped flesh out the desirability for NAC of being seen as not just “non-partisan” but as “multi-partisan”, involving women with a variety of political affiliations. This shift in thinking was reflected in the GranAfriCan Program which featured messages from esteemed Canadian women such as Lois Wilson, who had been appointed as an Independent Senator, and by some women well-known for their affiliation with one of the major political parties: namely, Flora McDonald (Conservative), Sharon Carstairs (Liberal), and Judy Wasylycia-Leis (NDP).



Following the conference, NAC received many requests and ideas, especially from new recruits who expressed their passion to work for change to improve the lives of the grandmothers of sub-Saharan Africa and of the children orphaned by AIDS in their care, particularly in relation to Bill C-393.

18. Find ways to marry fundraising and advocacy.

Many grandmother groups combine fundraising events with advocacy activities and visa versa, and there is an increasing belief that the two are a good “marriage” of addressing basic short-term needs (via fundraising) and longer term large scale systemic change to increase resources (through advocacy). The National Walk is a good example of this. Hearing of the Canmore Alberta grannies proposal for a national fund raising walk for the spring of 2010, NAC offered to set aside its plans for a 3rd annual

weekend of events in June, in order not to over-burden grandmothers. The National Walk Committee then agreed to include NAC's suggestion of an advocacy theme in their promotional materials. In the end, some groups elected to use NAC's advocacy theme of "Education for All", while others focussed on Bill C-393 because of its currency at the time. This partnership continues. The advocacy message for the 2011 walk is increasing support for the Global Fund.

19. Listen to our African sisters.

From the start, the grandmothers advocacy movement was guided by the words and stories of the grandmothers of Africa, so eloquently expressed in the 2006 Toronto Statement and in the material produced by the SLF. Dialogue with visiting activist grandmothers from sub-Saharan Africa for occasions like the first march and rally on Parliament Hill, *GranAfrican*, the AfriGrand Caravan and other events helped grandmother and grand-other advocates ground their work in the African experience.

This "grounding element" was further deepened when, in May 2010, 42 Canadian grandmothers travelled to South Africa and Swaziland, including several grandmother advocates from across the country. This trip was a turning point in three ways. The 42 Canadian grandmothers witnessed the empowerment of the African GoGos at their first Gathering and heard first-hand in the Manzini statement about their advocacy issues and concerns about women's rights. Interactions among the group of 42, and with some of the African grandmother activists, resulted in new or renewed appreciation of the need for advocacy to accomplish goals unattainable by other means, thus reinforcing the credibility of NAC's work. Upon their return home, many of the 42 Canadian grandmothers have taken on new or expanded roles in advocacy work.



20. Expand partnerships with the media and embrace new ways to communicate.

When NAC began in 2007, there was some resistance to the use of Internet technology. Email attachments and surfing a website was new to some, and grandmothers living in areas with dial-up service were frustrated with their ability to access electronic communication. That changed dramatically over the next three years, as grandmother activists got better hardware, friendlier software, better Internet access and experience using new technologies. Many remarked how they often turned to teenage grandchildren and nieces and nephews to teach them new skills. From the beginning, NAC members with experience in media relations and communications engaged in the traditional and still important use of media conferences, media releases and pitching stories. Many grandmothers made effective use of community newspapers as a way to tell the story. In 2010, NAC and individual

grandmothers began to embrace newer forms of social media—blogging and using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to communicate with large audiences.

Using footage shot between sessions at Hello Friend in June, NAC posted its first YouTube video urging passage of Bill C-393. “Grandmothers to Grandmothers—Get Drugs to Africa” was sent to all MPs, became part of the signatures on the emails of many grandmothers and grand-others, and circulated on Facebook as well. In a montage of faces and voices, including those of the two special guests from Africa, the case for Bill C-393 was clearly stated in ways that brought tears to the eyes and conviction to the hearts of many in this country.

The second video, “Grandmothers protest the gutting of Canada's Access to Medicines Bill” at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMT--IMJQgY&feature=related> offered a complementary message to the earlier video, emphasizing how much Bill C-393 mattered to both Canadian and African grandmothers. In 2011, the grandmothers received agreement from rap star K’naan to use the music soundtrack and rewrite the words to Wavin’ Flag—his runaway 2010 World Cup hit. A group of grandmothers and their families and friends recorded the granny version of Wavin’ Flag, which also promotes the need to get affordable lifesaving ARVS to Africa. The video was mounted on YouTube at http://youtu.be/LUTm9_Fk0bl. Grandmothers and young people quickly spread the word through Facebook and Twitter, and K’Nann posted a link on his celebrity website. In just one month the video had over 4,500 hits. Who says grannies can’t move with the times?

21. Reflect upon and share what works.

In 2009, Peggy Edwards was awarded an Alan Thomas Fellowship from the Carold Institute to Promote Civil Society and Voluntary Action, which enabled her to forgo her professional work in order to research and develop capacity in civil society for advocacy by older women. Using the Grandmothers Campaign as a case study, Peggy sought to answer the question: “How do we engage, nurture and sustain older women activists in civil society?”

Since Peggy was a founding Co-Chair of the National Advocacy Committee, the Fellowship provided a rare opportunity for a movement leader, in the context of wide consultations with grandmother advocates, to reflect on the evolution and sustainability of a movement still in development.

Peggy conducted focus groups with six grandmother groups across the country and did multiple interviews with key informants in the movement and with experts on women and active aging and advocacy in the voluntary sector. Her findings are summarized in a 10-minute video entitled *Voices of Advocacy: Older Women Speak Out*, which has become an inspirational and conversation-promoting resource for grandmother groups.



The video can be viewed and downloaded, along with complementary materials including “Ten Principles for Engaging and Nurturing Older Women Advocates”, at www.grannyvoices.com.

These then are the building blocks that established advocacy, as part of the Canadian Grandmothers to Grandmothers Movement, as a force for change and accountability in Canada:

1. Set a focus on solidarity and the human face of AIDS.
2. Look to a visionary leader to provide inspiration and guidance.
3. Start in one region, then go national.
4. Establish principles for working together.
5. Cultivate key relationships.
6. Focus on a limited number of key issues that fit defined criteria for action.
7. Partner with credible organizations that share common goals.
8. Show strength with visible public demonstrations.
9. Complement work in local constituencies by building a presence in Ottawa on the doorstep of the federal government.
10. Deliver the right information to the right desk at the right time.
11. Develop a strategic plan that spells out vision, goals, objectives and values.
12. Build leadership into the structure, nurture emerging leaders and pass on leadership roles.
13. Think in terms of a Ladder of Engagement.
14. Mobilize and equip the grassroots to act.
15. Invite high profile champions to join the cause.
16. Be prepared for elections.
17. Convene face-to face meetings of cross-national participants.
18. Find ways to marry fundraising and advocacy.

19. Listen to our African sisters.
20. Expand partnerships with the media and embrace new ways to communicate.
21. Reflect upon and share what works.

A Good Campaign Builds a Movement

Through the petition, NAC and the grandmothers' advocacy movement began the work to push for the reform of Canada's Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR). This campaign became the leading piece of advocacy work in 2009, 2010 and 2011. It was an exhilarating and sometimes exhausting experience, and a veritable "school of learning" for everyone. Key steps in the campaign, each of which galvanized and engaged grandmothers from coast-to-coast, led to key lessons learned.

Work closely with and learn from credible partners.

From the beginning, NAC partnered with other nongovernmental organizations who had worked on the original CAMR legislation and efforts to reform it since 2003. The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, led by Executive Director Richard Elliott, emerged as the lead organization and turned out to be a particularly strong partner for the grandmothers. The Grandmothers and other CSOs worked together at every step, providing complementary skills and opportunities for action. For example, the Legal Network had people with technical knowledge and lobbying experience who could work directly with the sponsors of bills; the grandmothers had grassroots persuasive leaders who could visit MPs in their home constituencies.



As the obvious influence of grandmothers became clearer, NAC members moved from being "grandmother guests" on the Global Treatment Access Group (GTAG) calls to being full members of that coalition and also of the International Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD).

Bombard parliamentary committees with communications from ordinary citizens.

On March 25, 2009, Senator Goldstein introduced a Private Member's bill to amend CAMR (Bill S-232) in the Senate. Senator Goldstein retired soon after and sponsorship of the bill was passed to Senator Sharon Carstairs. The Bill passed Second Reading, which paved the way for formal hearings to take place the next fall. As the Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce prepared to address Bill S-232, a grandmothers' advocacy postcard campaign to the Senate Standing Committee began. Thousands of postcards and letters were delivered to the Clerk of the Committee, so many that she commented it was

“highly unusual” for the Committee to receive evidence of so much public interest in a bill. Another, even larger postcard campaign appealed to the members of the Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology when it convened to review the Commons Bill C-393. The Clerk of the Industry Committee stopped counting after receiving over 12,000 individual pieces of correspondence about Bill C-393 from all across the country.

Serve as knowledgeable witnesses and tell the African grandmothers’ stories.

The success of the postcard campaign paved the way for the grandmothers’ delegation to address the Senate Committee hearings, giving evidence that the grandmothers represented a truly national citizen’s movement. The competent well-prepared delegation (including Gillian Sandeman, who prepared NAC’s brief, Kathleen Wallace-Deering, Marilyn Coolen and Linda Watson) appeared as witnesses on November 4, 2009. The experience confirmed that it was particularly effective to tell stories and bring the human face of African grandmothers and orphans to the issues. When hearings were held relating to the Commons bill the next year, The Grandmothers again applied to address the relevant committee and again bore witness to both the plight of those in places like sub-Saharan Africa without access to treatment drugs for HIV and AIDS and the resiliency of the African grandmothers and those around them which meant they could be relied upon even to help distribute such medicines.

Interact with parliamentarians around active legislation.



In March of 2009, during a parliamentary recess, members of *Grands ‘n’ More Winnipeg* met with MP Judy Wasylycia-Leis to discuss the importance of CAMR reform. In the course of the conversation, Judy agreed to take responsibility to see that a private member’s bill was brought forward in the House of Commons and May 25, 2009, she introduced Bill C-393, parallel legislation to that already in the Senate. Over the course of the next two years, sponsorship of Bill C-393 moved from Judy to MP Brian Masse and finally Paul Dewar.

Although the lead MPs on this issue were all affiliated with one party, and the lead Senator

with another, The Grandmothers persisted in seeking committed support for CAMR reform from all political parties. Concern for the issue was presented to politicians and bureaucrats a humanitarian concern and agreement encouraged in that context. This was not a tactical ploy but a reasoned and heartfelt position.

The CAMR reform bills in the Senate (S-232) and the Commons (C-393) provided members of the NAC Leadership Team and other grandmother advocates with an invaluable opportunity to learn how to relate to parliamentarians and navigate “the halls of power”. It was a revelation to some members of local groups that grandmother advocates were truly having an impact. As a result, in Ottawa and all

across the country, advocates became increasingly confident and well-prepared as they corresponded with parliamentarians.

Develop polished, granny-friendly resources for concrete action.

Tentatively at first, but with more confidence as time passed, NAC members researched and prepared pertinent background materials related to the two bills and developed granny-friendly resources. The focus upon specific legislation resulted in clearer action requests to the grassroots and greater numbers of grandmothers joining in advocacy actions. NAC produced flyers, postcards, leave-behind documents, FAQ sheets, facts and myths documents, templates for letters to the editor, scripts for phone blitzes, and eventually a major CAMR reform research paper for internal use. Desktop publishing skills of volunteers were employed to create articulate, good-looking, themed materials that grandmother and grand-other advocates were proud to use and that impressed recipients.



Celebrate progress and efforts each step of the way.

Throughout the three-year long campaign, it became clear that it was appropriate, even necessary, to recognize and celebrate all activities and each step. Every letter to the editor, every postcard, every grandmother interview was important. Judy Wasylycia-Leis, Richard Elliott and others credited the grandmothers with their first big win on December 2, 2009 when Bill C-393 passed second reading in the Commons. When the Prime Minister prorogued parliament soon after, Bill C-393 survived as a Private Member's Bill in the Commons, but the Senate bill died. Through the spring and fall of 2010 grandmothers collected a record number of signatures on postcards to Ottawa, while waiting impatiently for the Industry Committee to schedule hearing on Bill C-393.

Designate an internal strategy team to guide the grassroots.

In preparation for the next steps, NAC convened a grandmothers CAMR Team, headed by Elizabeth Rennie in partnership with Pat Evans, to work strategically with the CAMR Reform Team led by Richard Elliott, Executive Director of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and including UNICEF, RESULTS Canada, Dignitas, the UAEM students network, the International Coalition for AIDS and Development, and others. These partners frequently expressed appreciation for NAC's capacity to mobilize

grandmothers for postcard and urgent action blitzes, and to get a hearing both in riding offices and on the Hill at times when they could not. Grandmothers also made good use of local media outlets to plead the case.

Grandmother advocates were galvanized by knowledge that the intensely argued Bill C-393 to amend CAMR was awaiting hearings before the Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. The Elora grandmothers meeting in July of 2010 with their MP Michael Chong, then Chair of the Industry Committee, was a cause for celebration and a shining example of inventive grassroots intervention. He may have been surprised to encounter 50 grandmothers and grand-others awaiting him for the meeting but he was certainly impressed by the passion and cogency of the arguments put before him. He pledged support to Bill C-393 and although he was later shifted out of the Industry Committee, he was one of a group of government MPs who voted for the legislation when the time came.

Take bold action when necessary.

On October 26th 2010, Elizabeth Rennie presented a compelling brief to the Commons Committee studying Bill C-393 and challenged them to use their power to save lives, not abandon them. When it was time for them to address the hearings, she and Linda Watson also presented 3,000 postcards in support of Bill C-393, to add to the 9,000 already received by the Committee.

When it became apparent that some Committee members were committed to blocking a thorough, non-biased discussion of the Bill, grandmother observers in the room walked out in protest, shouting "Shame! Shame!" They then staged a sidewalk demonstration outside the building where they addressed MPs as they left the hearings. The demonstration was captured on video and posted on



YouTube by Brenda Rooney (Wakefield Grannies) and her husband Robert. This video inspired grandmothers across Canada who took up the chant "We are not going away!" In the end, to our enormous disappointment, the Industry Committee "gutted" Bill C-393, by removing the critical "one licence solution".

Grandmothers and grand-others in other locales also dogged Industry Committee MPs where they lived.

Be proud to be part of a movement that commands respect for older women.

Increasingly throughout the campaign, grandmother advocates were greeted with confirmation of both their abilities and the importance of the work they were doing. One Conservative MP told his visitors: "One thing you grandmothers have to get over is a sense of low self-image. Everybody on Parliament Hill now knows who 'The Grandmothers' are. You know your stuff and you command respect. You are a powerful group."

Don't throw in the towel prematurely.

At certain points in the CAMR campaign, the prospects for success appeared very bleak. Both opponents of the bill and some of the members of local groups recommended abandoning the effort and moving on. One obstacle assumed to be insurmountable was the requirement for a unanimous vote in the Commons to transfer the sponsorship of Bill C-393 from Judy Wasylycia-Leis (who resigned as MP) to another MP. Indeed, certain messengers guaranteed that the bill would die on this procedural hurdle. Another bleak moment was when the Commons Industry Committee, by a vote of 5 to 4, stripped the Bill of its key “one-license solution”. Opponents had pledged to “gut the bill in Committee and then kill it in the House” and it appeared this program was in motion.

However, with Richard Elliott's legal expertise, the support of the larger interagency CAMR Reform Team and the perseverance of MP champions, NAC continued putting pressure on MPs from the grassroots and through the Hill Team. Against all odds, not only was unanimous support for the transfer of sponsorship achieved, but the “one licence solution” was re-instated. Premature withdrawal from the campaign, tempting as it was a times, would have left the job undone and that just wasn't good enough!

Increase the pressure as events demand.

In the days leading up to the final vote on Bill C-393, grandmothers phoned and emailed MPs and stood in freezing rain to greet those who took part in a packed press conference, including Stephen Lewis, celebrity K'naan and James Orbinski of Dignitas. Media picked up the themes and major news outlets took up the cause.

On March 9th, 2011 Bill C-393—with the critical “one licence solution” reinstated—passed Final Reading in the House of Commons by a vote of 172 to 111. “The Little Bill That Could” had made it to the top of the hill!



Grandmothers and grand-others all across the country watched the proceedings on television and celebrated, while the 85 grandmothers and grand-others in the House of Commons Gallery cheered so enthusiastically that it took the Speaker a few minutes to restore order in the House.

The day after Bill C-393 was passed in the House of Commons, Senator Sharon Carstairs rose in the Senate to give notice of her intention to move Bill C-393 at second reading on Monday, March 21st. She made an eloquent speech addressing each of the common bits of misinformation reported about the Bill, as grannies packed the gallery. In the end, however, a Conservative Senator moved to adjourn the debate. On the 22nd grandmothers not only sat in the Gallery but also stood outside the Centre Block ringing a bell every few seconds to mark the unnecessary death of yet another human being because of insufficient access to lifesaving medicines. The CAMR Reform Team met by teleconference daily, urgent

updates went out every evening, grandmother and grand-other advocates sent many emails and lit up the phone lines of Senators' switchboards, but the result was the same every day: adjournment.

Turn setbacks into opportunities.

When Parliament was dissolved for an election on March 25, 2011, Bill C-393 died. The determination to see a working CAMR, however, did not die. Grandmothers made plans with partners that same day to make compulsory licencing an election issue, and followed through with CAMR reform postcards, flyers and information sheets. Materials were created to assist grandmother and grand-other advocates to raise strategic questions at all-candidate meetings, on call-in shows or in the context of online forums. The intent was to educate party supporters and the general public as well as potential members of parliament in anticipation of a renewed campaign once parliament reconvened.

The message was clear: Post-election, the grannies will be back!

Work undertaken in the context of the national CAMR reform campaign contributed additional building blocks for effective advocacy and a strong movement, including:

- ❖ Work closely with and learn from credible partners.
- ❖ Bombard parliamentary committees with communications from ordinary citizens.
- ❖ Serve as knowledgeable witnesses and tell the African grandmothers' stories.
- ❖ Interact with parliamentarians around active legislation.
- ❖ Develop polished, granny-friendly resources for concrete action.
- ❖ Celebrate progress and efforts each step of the way.
- ❖ Designate an internal strategy team to guide the grassroots.
- ❖ Take bold action when necessary.
- ❖ Be proud to be part of a movement that commands respect for older women.
- ❖ Don't throw in the towel prematurely.
- ❖ Increase the pressure as events demand.
- ❖ Turn setbacks into opportunities.

CONCLUSION

by

Kathleen Wallace-Deering, Founding Co-Chair

...against all odds, the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign has become a social movement. The Canadian grandmothers have not only raised awareness and huge sums of money (twelve million dollars in five years!), but they have become a force of progressive advocacy at crucial political moments. Their collective role in fighting for the passage of Bill C-393 on generic drugs was truly awesome (as my grandsons would say)....

--Stephen Lewis May 2011

Stephen Lewis made this comment in an April 2011 letter to SLF supporters. Referencing both Canadian and African grandmothers, he concluded by saying, “the Grandmothers' Movement has helped to transform international development policy.” *A Story Evolving* tracks some of the steps along the way to becoming the significant and effective social movement in Canada he describes.

What is particularly noteworthy is that these achievements have been accomplished almost entirely by volunteers. NAC has been built and run entirely by grandmothers and grand-others coast-to-coast who donated their time, energy and skills. In 2008 we tried to quantify the volunteer hours of NAC members, and estimated over 8,000 hours being contributed to NAC's work by committee members over a 12-month period. This annual volunteer hour figure likely doubled in 2010, as our work on CAMR developed into a full-fledged campaign on legislation before the Commons and Senate. It does not begin to include the many thousands of volunteer hours of advocacy work done by members of local grandmothers groups.

As we mark and celebrate the fourth anniversary of the founding NAC teleconference on May 23, 2007, we acknowledge and pay tribute to all those who have helped build the national advocacy network and who have contributed to our work and made possible our accomplishments, naming here:

- ❖ the dozens of women who have participated as members of the National Advocacy Committee and its Working Groups, whose names appear at the end of this document,
- ❖ the hundreds of women who have taken NAC's advocacy materials and action campaigns to their own local grandmothers groups and encouraged their group members to “step onto the ladder of engagement” of advocacy actions,
- ❖ the women of the Ottawa/Gatineau region who have repeatedly gone to Parliament Hill, to remind politicians that Canadian grandmothers are not giving up and not going away,
- ❖ Brenda Rooney and her husband Robert who generously donated their skills as film-makers for a couple of our first YouTube videos, and
- ❖ our colleagues in civil society organizations who have generously taken time from their own

over-burdened schedules to offer us guidance and assistance.

We are particularly indebted to:

- ❖ Richard Elliott and his colleagues at the Canadian HIV AIDS Legal Network,
- ❖ Michael O'Connor and Nicci Stein of ICAD,
- ❖ Kristen Ostling and Katy Kydd Wright for their assistance in strategic planning, and
- ❖ Michael Cooke, Vice-President of George Brown College and a staunch supporter of the grandmothers advocacy network.

Special mention for their huge commitment of time and energy is due to members of the NAC Leadership Team: Dariel Bateman, Pat Evans, Julie Gleadow and Gillian Sandeman, as well as to Linda Watson who developed so many of NAC's print and web resources, and to Andrea Beal and Marilyn Coolen who have taken on the responsibilities of NAC Co-Chairs.

I am especially grateful to my co-chair Peggy Edwards who brought enormous energy, commitment, skill and generosity to this work of building our National Advocacy Committee and nurturing our grandmothers' advocacy movement. From the start, Peggy set a high standard of professional excellence for NAC's work which has been critical in the respect we have gained within the Grandmothers movement but also with government, the media and the public.

Finally, I want to express the appreciation of all of NAC to:

- ❖ Ilana Landsberg-Lewis and the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign staff at the Stephen Lewis Foundation, to whom we have repeatedly turned for the support and practical assistance essential to our existence, and
- ❖ the African grandmothers who are the inspiration for all that we do: May we more fully understand what it means to be in solidarity with you and may we be faithful to the promise made at the Toronto Gathering that, "We will not rest until you can rest."

As Peggy and I pass on the baton of leadership to new NAC Co-Chairs, we each remain committed to contributing to the effort of adding new building blocks to our movement. Some of the challenges ahead for NAC include: 1) learning to navigate the new political terrain of a majority Parliament for the next four years; 2) increasing NAC's capacity for advocacy in French; and 3) raising the funds needed to sustain NAC and our advocacy movement. While it is absolutely remarkable what has been accomplished by dedicated and skilled volunteers, it has become increasingly clear that NAC's work, and our advocacy movement, has grown beyond what can be sustained solely by volunteers without some budgetary and staff support.

It has been immensely fulfilling to be part of this great adventure of building an advocacy movement which we hope will someday achieve real improvements in the lives of African grandmothers and the children orphaned by AIDS in their care.

From the start, I have experienced our advocacy work in the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign as a "blessed endeavour" in which, each step of the way, women have joined our work, bringing the skills we have needed, along with good will, passion and commitment. As each of us has contributed our own particular gifts, the results have been extraordinary, and it has been a delight to behold and be part of. As NAC enters a new phase of its life and work, I look forward to seeing who will be joining us, as

together we add new building blocks to our movement and write new chapters in “A Story Evolving.”

Thank you to all of the women who have participated in the work of NAC since the first meeting on May 23, 2007

Mary Jane Amey Montreal and Eastern Townships, QC

Mary Baker *CanGo Grannies* Kamloops, BC

Daniel Bateman *Grandmothers Calgary* Calgary, AB

Pat Bayliss *Grandmothers of Alberta for a New Generation (GANG)* Edmonton, AB

Andrea Beal *GRAN-Aurora* Aurora, ON

Myrtle Blinn *Grandmas AIDing Grandmas* Ottawa, ON

Jean Bodie *Sherwood Park East Side Grannies* Edmonton, AB

Suzanne Brooks *North Bay Grandmothers for Africa* North Bay, ON

Enid Butler *Grands 'n' More Winnipeg* Winnipeg, MB

Marilyn Coolen *The Bay Grandmothers* Upper Tantallon, NS

Pat Dolan *GoGo Grannies of Aylmer* Aylmer, QC

Jane Earle *The Bay Grandmothers* Upper Tantallon, NS

Peggy Edwards *One World Grannies* Ottawa, ON

Hilary Elliott *Grandmothers Calgary* Calgary, AB

Ruth Elliott *Grandmothers of Alberta for a New Generation (GANG)* Edmonton, AB

Sharon Endicott *Grandmothers of Alberta for a New Generation (GANG)* Edmonton, AB

Pat Evans *Capital Grannies* Ottawa, ON

Chris Fancie *GRAN-Aurora* Aurora, ON

Ann Frost (CAMR Working Group) *Lions Gate Gogos*, West Vancouver BC

Betty Giroux *Grandmothers and Grandothers* Barrie, ON

Julie Gleadow *Sunshine Coast Grandmothers and Grandothers* Roberts Creek, BC

Sherry Goodwin *Victoria Grandmothers for Africa* Victoria, BC

Linda Hallett *Carry on Grannies* Victoria, BC

Carole Holmes *Oomama* Oakville, ON

Bonnie Johnson *One World Grannies* Ottawa, ON

Roz Johns (*ELLSA Working Group*) *Richmond Gogos* Richmond BC

Mary Jordan *CanGo Grannies* Kamloops, BC

Carol Judd *Victoria Grandmothers for Africa* Victoria, BC

Therese Lambert-Bourque *Westhill Grandmothers* Montreal, QC

Ede Leeson *Grandmothers 4 Grandmothers* Regina, SK

Bev LeFrancois *Oomama* Oakville, ON

Dianne Linden *Grandmothers of Alberta for a New Generation (GANG)* Edmonton, AB

Anita MacFarlane *Grandmothers and Grandothers* Barrie, ON

Beth Madole *Cobourg GoGo Grannies* Cobourg, ON

Nancy Martin *Grandmothers Together* Peterborough, ON

Donna McBride (*Global Fund Working Group*) *Oneness Gogos* White Rock, BC

Jan McConnell *Fellowship Grandmothers of Chateauguay* Chateauguay, QC

Eleanor McDonald *Women for African Grandmothers* Toronto, ON

Patt McGuire *Sunshine Coast Grandmothers and Grandothers* Roberts Creek, BC

Bev McKibbin *Grannies All About Kids* Metcalfe, ON

Judi MacLeod (*ELLSA Working Group*) *Bruce Peninsula Grandparent Connection* Tobermory, ON

Marilyn McVicar *Richmond GoGos* Richmond, BC

Marty Morgan *Grandmothers Together* Peterborough, ON

Liz Murphy (*ELLSA Working Group*) *Grands and Friends* Ottawa, ON

Jenny Neal *Grandmothers 4 Grandmothers* Saskatoon, SK

Sheila Nelson *CanGo Grannies* Kamloops, BC

Maggie O’Sullivan *Campbell River Grandmothers to Grandmothers* Campbell River, BC

Rhonda Penny *Grandmothers of Alberta for a New Generation (GANG)* Edmonton, AB

Sharon Polansky *Toronto Grandmothers Embrace* Toronto, ON

Elizabeth Rennie *Burlington Ubuntu Grandwomen* Burlington, ON

Gillian Sandeman *Grandmothers Together* Peterborough, ON

Gwen Sherry *Trent Hills Grannies for Africa* Campbellford, ON

Joanne Sherwin *Westhill Grandmothers* Montreal, QC

Margaret Smallwood *Grandmothers Embrace* South Simcoe, ON

Pat Sparling *G’Moms of Port Perry* Port Perry, ON

Brigid Stewart *Grandmothers Calgary* Calgary, AB

Sharon Swanson *Lanark County Grannies* Perth, ON

Valerie Swinton – Ex-Officio *One World Grannies* Ottawa, ON

Kathy Reid *Malaika Grandmothers* Halifax, NS

Yvonne Schmitz *Grandmothers Calgary* Calgary, AB

Rita Taenzer *South Okanagan Grandmothers for Africa* Penticton, BC

Kathleen Wallace-Deering *Greater Van Gogos* Coquitlam, BC

Linda Watson *Grands ‘n’ More Winnipeg* Winnipeg, MB

Judy Waugh *Ubuntu Grandmothers* Fall River, NS

Star Weiss, Victoria BC

Patricia Whitely (ELLSA Working Group) *Van Gogos* Vancouver, BC

Linda Williams (ELLSA Working Group) *Oomama* Oakville, ON

Linda Wills *The Bay Grandmothers* Upper Tantallon, NS

Pat Winston *Westhill Grandmothers* Montreal, QC

Ruth Worthington (CAMR Working Group) *South Fraser Gogos* Ladner, BC

Anne Young *Carry on Grannies* Victoria, BC

SLF EX-OFFICIO:

Mary Anna Beer, Grandmothers Campaign Advisor

Julie Coultas, Coordinator, Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign

Joanna Henry, Coordinator, Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign

Janis Purdy, staff

Helen Silbiger, staff

Oline Twiss, volunteer consultant, Montreal PQ