



Advocating for grandmothers, children and youth in Sub-Saharan Africa

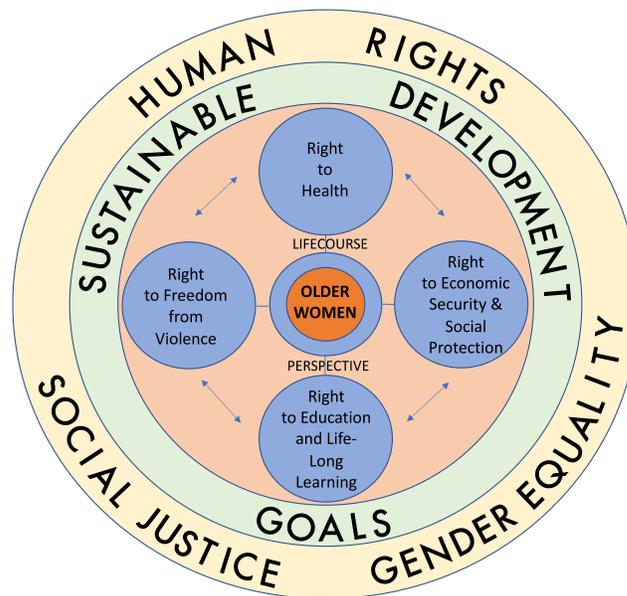
Annual Report

April 1st 2018 to March 31st 2019

Introduction

This annual report is prepared for the 6th Annual General Meeting of GRAN to be held by teleconference on May 8th 2019 at 3:00pm (EDT)

GRAN is an ever-changing, evolving organization as we respond to the environment in which we are working. However, our overall mission, which is to advocate in meaningful and strategic ways for the human rights of grandmothers, children and youth in sub-Saharan Africa, remains unchanged. Since our last annual report, we held a very successful “Hello Friends” gathering in June in Ottawa and, as a consequence, have developed a new Strategic Plan to cover the years 2019 to 2023 and have also developed a visual framework of our priorities and values to guide our advocacy actions now and in the coming years.



Our central focus in this framework is “older women” which also includes the children in their care. There are four circles surrounding the centre, each highlighting a specific human right – (1) the Right to Health (2) the Right to Freedom from Violence (3) the Right to Education and Lifelong Learning and (4) the Right to

Economic Security and Social Protection. Each of our campaigns fits under one or more of these human rights. All our work is guided by the central themes of Human Rights, Social Justice, and Gender Equality, as well as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. We are aware of the challenges of staging multiple campaigns at the same time. This certainly increases the workload of the Steering Committee and also presents competing demands on the grassroots.

Our Advocacy Campaigns:

Access to Medicines

Canada Motion M-132 on Health Research

Motion M-132 called on the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health to undertake a study of federally funded health research to understand how to best ensure that the results of this research increases access to medicines and lowers their cost in Canada and globally. Written and oral submissions from health researchers, patients' groups and civil society organizations, including GRAN, were key to the work and development of the Committee's report. The report "***Towards Open Science: Promoting Innovation in Pharmaceutical Research and Development and Access to Affordable Medications Both in Canada and Abroad***" was submitted to the House of Commons in November 2018 and is available on the web.

TB Campaign

On September 18, 2018, the United Nations convened the first ever UN General Assembly High Level meeting (HLM) on tuberculosis (TB) with the goal to develop a plan to end TB by 2030. Canada was represented by Dr. Jane Philpott, then Minister of Indigenous Services, and Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada. The HLM resulted in a number of recommended measures to address this global health emergency that kills millions of people every year. GRAN is working with the Interagency Coalition on AIDs and Development (ICAD) and RESULTS Canada on this issue and hopes for success in the future.

Global Fund

GRAN is again working with other civil society organizations to encourage the Canadian government to make an early and generous contribution to the 6th global fund replenishment conference which will take place in October 2019. This highly successful fund fights the diseases of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and has been responsible for saving countless lives. We are asking the government to pledge \$ 1 billion over three years.

Ending Violence against Women

The Orange Campaign This was the 5th year that GRAN has participated in the United Nations' campaign marking **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**.

The UNiTE Campaign's global advocacy theme for 2018 was "Orange the World: #HearMeToo. A high profile event organized by the Women Peace and Security Network launched the campaign on Parliament Hill on November 27th. It was hosted by the South African High Commissioner along with three



GRANs in Saskatoon send out their message – November 2018

Canadian Senators, the Under-Secretary-General of the UN, and the Executive Director of UN Women. The Hill team worked hard to get all MPs to make a statement in the House by wearing an orange ribbon in Parliament. Unfortunately only a few MPs chose to do so. However the campaign was extremely successful at the local level with many groups participating. All across the country GRANs marched, met with their MPs, MLAs and municipal councils, hosted panel discussions, engaged members of the public in coffee shops and supermarkets and lit up their communities in orange. We were pleased that our partners in Uganda, Girls not Brides and Uganda Reach the Aged, retweeted our Orange Campaign tweets and “liked” our Orange posts on Facebook, amplifying our message to an African audience.

Mining Justice

Mining Justice was approved in February as a new GRAN campaign. The campaign’s initial focus was to ensure that a Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) be appointed as promised by the Prime Minister. Now that the ombudsperson is finally in place, GRAN will continue to advocate that she be independent and be given powers to investigate claims of human rights abuses by Canada’s oil, gas and mining companies abroad, be able to recommend and monitor sanctions as needed, and compel witnesses and the release of documents. It is anticipated that this campaign will continue to monitor ongoing mining justice issues and the role and effectiveness of the Ombudsperson for the foreseeable future.

Education

The Education working group has developed a new Readers’ Theatre entitled “**Hope for the Future: Achieving Human Rights for Older Women in sub-Saharan Africa**”.

The working group has also been exploring the research on educating men and boys on gender norms with the aim of reducing violence against women and girls in their communities. A backgrounder to initiate discussion on this topic has been developed.

It is encouraging that the topic of “education” seems to be an increasing focus at the United Nations and also with the Canadian government.

Bigger than our Borders

GRAN is joining with other organizations, especially the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), in a nationwide movement entitled “**Bigger than our Borders**”. Many Canadians are concerned about the human rights of people around the world, and this campaign will attempt to focus this concern into meaningful action. Heading into the election, the campaign focus will be **#VoteAID**, with efforts to make international assistance a “vote-moving issue”. We are asking all political parties to commit to an increase in funding for Canadian Aid. Currently, Canada spends only 0.26% of our Gross National Income (GNI) on international assistance – this figure needs to gradually increase until the internationally agreed upon goal of 0.7% of GNI is reached. This campaign will be our focus for the upcoming fall election. All candidates and parties will be asked for their policy on this important issue.

Hill Team

This year, GRAN’s Hill Team (HT) reviewed and updated its mandate, recognizing the growing importance of participation with other civil society organizations in the many consultations and events organized by Global Affairs Canada. Members were involved in a number of projects and events – organizing the Hill Event for Hello Friends, participating in the CCIC’s annual conference, and attending a number of meetings with parliamentarians and Global Affairs Canada. At one such meeting, the Deputy Minister responsible for sub-Saharan Africa, acknowledged the importance of including older women in policy and programming, given the

important role they play in their communities and that they are often the poorest of the poor. This was an important signal that our message is getting through in Ottawa! The Hill Team also participated in the celebration of International Development Week 2019, with events on Parliament Hill in February. Recently, the HT prepared a one-page handout on GRAN -- our issues, priorities and campaigns. This will function as a useful introduction when we visit our MPs, enabling us to succinctly present a "whole of GRAN" picture of our work in one simple handout. In addition, the HT has created a document and calendar to assist with coordination of our multiple campaigns.

Archives

For the past few years, a small team of women has been quietly and tirelessly working on preserving the collective memories of GRAN. We are pleased to report that the first deposit of print material covering the period from 2006 to 2016 has been delivered to the Archives at York University in Toronto. The next deposit will be made in 2020 and will cover the years from 2016. It is wonderful to have a permanent record of all that our energetic, skillful, determined and feisty women's movement has achieved!

Trip to Uganda February 4th to 14th 2019

For the second year, GRAN organized a trip to Uganda under the auspices of GIVE International. Nine GRANs travelled to Uganda to gain first-hand knowledge of the situation of African grandmothers and the challenges they face. Time was divided between the town of Jinja, where we met with grandmothers and participated in a number of GIVE-sponsored development projects, and the capital, Kampala, where we met with several national civil society organizations who are working diligently to improve the situation of older women and girls in Uganda.

We were there to listen and learn and were, by turns, moved to tears and despair by the dire situations we witnessed, as well as inspired to hope and optimism by the amazing Ugandans we met who are working so hard, and with success, to improve the daily lives of their fellow citizens.

As we continue to process all that we heard and saw, we feel we are able to draw three early lessons:

(1) GRAN has its priorities right. (2) There are some amazing local and national organizations in Uganda that are bringing hope and light to the situation of older women and girls. (3) There are opportunities to partner with like-minded Ugandan civil society organizations.

These meetings with African grandmothers are extremely beneficial as we discuss our campaigns and the focus for our advocacy. Discussions on how to continue to foster these relationships are ongoing.



Nancy Hall listening to Ugandan Grandmothers – February 2019

Hello Friends



GRNs on Parliament Hill after attending Question Period
June 2018

Another highly successful Hello Friends took place from June 4th to 7th in Ottawa. With a total of 85 registered for part or all of the conference (61 for the full conference), it was a wonderful opportunity to reflect, renew and rejoice, to experience inspiring, engaging and knowledgeable speakers, to develop new knowledge and to plan for the future.

Dr. Samantha Nutt led things off with a compelling presentation about her experiences in conflict zones and about the incredible harm being caused by the global small arms trade. We also heard from many other enthusiastic speakers – May Chazan on “Aging Activism,” Pat Dolan on “*Bigger than our Borders*”, Peggy Edwards on “*Older Women Count!*”, Jane Rabinowicz on “*Climate Change: A Gender-based Perspective*”, Velma McColl on “*Creating a Successful Parliamentary Strategy*” and Ketty Nivyabandi on *Women’s Activism in Burundi*”. The group

of GRNs that had visited Uganda in January gave a presentation on their experiences and what they had learnt from the grandmothers and advocacy groups they had visited. We also had a choice of 3 workshops to attend: Mining Justice; From Cat-calling to Sex Trafficking; and Measuring Our Advocacy. We attended Question Period in Parliament and were recognized in the House. We organized a meeting with parliamentarians to discuss and share our insights about older women in sub-Saharan Africa. We also spent time discussing the future directions GRAN should take.

All the participants appreciated the energy and enthusiasm of the event, the opportunity to meet GRAN members from other parts of the country and to renew old friendships – a wonderful event!

Partnerships

GRAN became a full member of the **Canadian Council for International Cooperation** (CCIC) in the fall of last year. CCIC is a coalition of Canadian voluntary sector organizations working globally to achieve sustainable human development. With a membership of over 80 organizations, all working in some way to end poverty in the developing world, it serves as an umbrella for Canadian civil society organizations. GRAN has already been a member of **the Africa-Canada Forum** (ACF), which is one of three working groups of the CCIC, for a number of years. We are finding these partnerships to be increasingly fruitful and useful to our work. They give us insights into the workings of Global Affairs Canada as well as access to parliamentarians and international forums. A representative from GRAN attended the CCIC annual conference in Ottawa this past year and learnt about the trends and opportunities in international development.

We also became members of the **Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People** (GAROP) and have had a very active partnership with the **Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development** (ICAD) and **Médecins Sans Frontières** in our work on the TB campaign.

Communication

Website: Our website continues to thrive and keeps all GRAN members up to date on news from around the world, advocacy actions we can take, and information on our issues and campaigns. At Hello Friends we were very pleased to award our website technician, Daniel Hegarty, with the “Order of GRAN” in recognition of the countless pro-bono hours he generously gives to keep the GRAN website operating smoothly.

GRAN continues to translate as many resources as possible into French and we are very grateful to our volunteer translators who do much of this work for us. We are pleased that all our “Older Women Count!” documents will very soon be available on the website in both official languages.

New materials now available under “Resources” on the website:

- 1) Thanks to the “Ageing Activisms Collective” we now have amazing personal stories from some of our GRAN members told in their own voices – what sparked their interest in advocacy and why they continue to be passionate about their work
- 2) “Welcome to GRAN”, a useful document when introducing new members to GRAN.
- 3) A list of films for raising awareness among our grassroots groups.

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

Social Media: We encourage our members to use social media, primarily Twitter and Facebook, as much as possible to amplify our messages and to support the campaigns of our partners.

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

Aeroplan

We are pleased to report that a total of **94,164** miles (This includes the extra 10% that Aeroplan adds to each donation.) was donated to GRAN during our November Aeroplan month. Thank you! This will help GRAN members attend national and international conferences, bring in speakers for special events, and facilitate the face-to-face meetings of GRAN’s Leadership Team.

Fundraising

We are pleased to report that our February fundraising month brought in \$5750 to help keep GRAN’s advocacy work supported and growing. While it is true that we accomplish great things on a shoestring budget, keeping



Daniel Haggerty, the 2018 recipient of the Order of GRAN award, with the very appreciative Web Team and GRAN Co-Chairs

us connected and on top of our issues does require some financial investment. Conference calls, website maintenance, as well as registration and travel to regional, national, and international meetings, all require ongoing funding. We really appreciate all who supported us – without you all this would not be possible!

Appendix

Leadership Team

Janet Siddall (Whitehorse, YT) Jenny Neal (Saskatoon, SK), co-chairs
Heather Fraser (Vancouver, BC), Ruth Buckinger (Sackville, NB), , Irene Clarke - treasurer(Oakville, ON) Pat Dolan (Gatineau, QC) Pauline Barrett (Vancouver, BC), Myrtle Blinn (Ottawa, Ontario)

Recording secretaries: Sue McKenna and Linda Kulkarni

Access to Medicines Working Group

Bunny Keeley (chair)
 Angela Quinlan
 Marilyn Coolen
 JoAnn Mulhern
 Ginger Shaw
 Sue McKenna
 Jenny Cervinskas
 Mary Spoke
 Linda Lange
 Irene Clarke (LT liaison)

Ending Violence against Women Working Group

Janet Siddall (co-chair and LT liaison)
 Lynne Kent
 Colleen Stefanich
 Heather Fraser
 Myrtle Blinn
 Ann Rycroft
 Barb Rother

Education Working Group

Valerie Wright (co-chair)
 Ann Frost (co-chair)
 Phyllis Webster
 Diane Woods
 Sharon Swanson

Regional Leaders:**British Columbia**

Pauline Barrett
 JoAnn Mulhern
 Gail Boylan
 Sharon Swanson
 Rita Taenzer

Prairies

Jenny Neal

Atlantic

Sue McKenna
 Marilyn Coolen

Regional Leaders continued:**Ontario**

Valerie Wright
 Annie Creighton
 Linda Kulkarni
 Gaye-Francis Alexander
 Irene Clarke
 Joyce Nicholson
 Sharon Graham
 Dana Bachman

Quebec

Suzanne Defresne
 Pamela Walden-Landry

Hill Team

Pat Dolan (co-chair)
 Hilary Elliott (co-chair)
 Bonnie Johnson
 Bunny Keeley
 Myrtle Blinn
 Susan Carter
 Valerie Wright
 Bev McKibbin

Website Team

Pat Evans
 Marilyn Coolen
 Ruth Buckinger
 Annie Creighton
 Kathy O'Neill
 Daniel Hegarty (training and technical support)

Volunteer Translators

Mia Overduin (Coordinator)
 Ruth Buckinger (Coordinator)
 Lina Halle
 Suzanne Dufresne
 Johanne Brisson
 Gisèle Mansfield
 Roland Breton
 Cathy Blondeau