



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

GRAN Update: October 2025

Announcing Our Next All-of-GRAN Campaign!

The GRAN Steering Committee has made the decision to focus on WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) for our next all-of-GRAN campaign, beginning January 2026.



Rationale: The lack of sustainable and safe water, sanitation, and hygiene remains one of the greatest challenges facing low-income countries. According to [Water Aid](#), 700 million people around the world still don't have even basic access to water close to home, 1.5 billion don't have basic sanitation (toilets) and two billion lack basic hygiene facilities (soap and water) to clean themselves, their food, and their environment in order to stay healthy and keep diseases from spreading. WASH is a critical element affecting child nutrition and the Right to Food (our most recent all-of-GRAN campaigns). The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 50% of undernutrition is associated with repeated diarrhea or intestinal worm infections as a result of unsafe

water, inadequate sanitation, or insufficient hygiene. And poor WASH conditions are thought to be one of the main causes of child stunting. To give you a quick taste of why we think this is a perfect fit for GRAN, watch [this 3-minute video](#) from UNICEF.

Next Steps... Calling for Volunteers!

Now that our advocacy focus is set, the next step is to form the team that will plan and coordinate this campaign. Five or six volunteers are needed to develop the campaign strategy and plan its implementation. This team would ideally begin meeting in November. As for the time commitment, the campaign team will set their own meeting schedule, likely a couple of times a month to begin with and then "as needed" as the campaign rolls along. We expect the active campaign to run from January to June 2026. Please give this serious consideration. So much depends on having a small group of committed people to coordinate partnerships, learning, and action. The campaign team can count on the full support of the GRAN Steering Committee, Coordinating Team, Watch Groups, and Web Team to contribute to and facilitate the work of the campaign. Email us at info@grandmothersadvocacy.org with questions or to volunteer. No previous experience necessary – just a passion for this important issue and a desire to make change happen.

GRAN Website "Open House" – You are invited!



You are all invited to an "Open House" at our GRAN website on **Wednesday, October 29th at 1:00 p.m. ET**. We are so proud of our new website and want to show it off! We also want you to feel right at home, so are offering this guided tour for you to know what's there and where to find it. Our GRAN Web Team members – Ruth Buckinger, Kathy O'Neil, and Rae Yates – will be your hosts. Join us and bring any questions and feedback you may have. Register [here](#).

Health Watch Group (Sandra Stec, Mary Spoke, Sheila Pepper, Cathy Thompson, Diane Scaletta)


The Health Watch Group (HWG) continues to advocate for an ambitious pledge for the [Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria](#) for its [Eighth Replenishment](#).

For this replenishment, we are asking our government to invest \$1.37 billion over three years. Recently the HWG asked us to include this e-postcard – [in English](#) or [in French](#) – in emails to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State for International Development, and your MP. If you haven't done so already, please copy and paste the postcard (from the links above) into the body of your email as an attention-getter.

Make your accompanying message short and to the point. Say why you care about the work of The Global Fund and then include our ask: \$1.37 billion over three years!

THE GLOBAL FUND WORKS!

- 70 million lives saved since 2002
- 7.4m treated for tuberculosis in 2024
- 25.6m people on antiretroviral treatment for HIV in 2024
- 162m insecticide-treated mosquito nets distributed in 2024

<http://grandmothersadvocacy.org>  **grandmothers**
Advocacy Network
Mouvement de soutien des
grandes-mères info@grandmothersadvocacy.org

We also took part in an advocacy action in support of The Global Fund that was spearheaded by the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF). On October 8th, GRANs participated in a "Call your MP" day. To date, close to 170 people from GRAN and other CSOs in the coalition have made calls to their MPs asking them to urge the Prime Minister to make an ambitious pledge to the Global Fund. The SLF is keeping this campaign open because MPs are still listening. So, if you haven't done so already, please make your call today, using [this link](#).

Education Watch Group (Phyllis Webster, Ann Frost, Sharon Graham, Sharon Vanclief, Hilda Young, Valerie Wright)

6 million young moms in Africa are not in school. They can be. Adolescent pregnancies happen. Far too often. Globally, [nearly a third](#) of all women in developing countries start having children at the age of 19 or younger, which means that 21 million children are born to girls aged 15-19 years every year. If all of those girls were in school and then had to drop out, it would mean 57,000 girls being excluded each day.

[This article](#) from the World Education Blog explores this problem in several African countries. Using examples from the DRC, Uganda, and Tanzania, the article shows that passing a law is only the beginning. The real work lies in consistent enforcement and challenging the societal attitudes that stand in the way of progress. Excluding pregnant adolescents from school is not a solution; it is a social and economic stain that perpetuates a cycle of poverty, stigma, and violence. Ultimately, allowing a pregnant girl to remain in the classroom is not just an act of mercy; it is a strategic investment in the future. To learn more, [click here](#).



A girl makes the long journey to school in Kailo village near Kindu, Maniema province, DRC. Photo: GPE/Elvix Kwanu

“Draw the Line” Events

On September 20th, GRANS in a number of cities and communities participated in a global initiative to *draw the line* against injustice. Climate justice, migrant justice, economic justice, Indigenous rights, and anti-war movements joined together in a show of solidarity for people, for peace, and for the planet. See some of our GRAN activists below!



Greater Vancouver GRANS (L to R): Gail Mullan, Mary Spoke, Pauline Barrett, Cissy Liu, and Kathleen Wallace-Deering, along with Liz Dill from the Victoria GRANS (middle back row)



Tina Agrell and Elizabeth Rennie, Golden Horseshoe GRANS in Oakville, Ont.



L to R: Susan Carter, Linda Kulkarni, Stella Val, Cathy Thompson, and Jo-Anne Stead at the Ottawa Draw the Line march.

Mining Justice Watch Group (Liz Dill, Gaye-Francis Alexander, JoAnn Mulhern, Diane Scaletta, Phyllis Webster, Anne Young)

Seven years ago, GRAN's Mining Justice Watch Group (MJWG) was formed to work in partnership with [Mining Watch Canada](#) and the [Canadian Network for Corporate Accountability \(CNCA\)](#) to ensure the establishment of an Ombudsperson with the power to hold Canadian companies operating overseas accountable for their actions. The position was established in 2018; however, the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) has not been effective in investigating complaints and ensuring accountability by Canadian companies operating overseas. Additionally, the position has now been vacant since 2023. When Green Party of Canada Leader Elizabeth May recently asked why, the Minister for International Trade, Maninder Sidhu, had no answer. Watch their exchange during Question Period in the House of Commons [here](#).



Image courtesy of Council of Canadians

The Okavango Delta in Namibia is a unique and environmentally sensitive ecosystem threatened by oil and gas exploration by Canadian mining company ReCon Africa. The organization, Saving Okavango's Unique Life (SOUL), with support from GRAN's MJWG and other human rights and environmental groups, has been working to protect it. SOUL wrote to Minister Sidhu complaining about the failure of CORE to address ReCon's environmental and human rights abuses in the region, and included this key point: **"By failing to ensure an**

effective and credible process, the Canadian government is sending a message to African communities that Canadian mining companies may operate with impunity, in a manner consistent with colonial practices."

But there is also good news! The Government of Ecuador announced that it is revoking the mining license of the Canadian mining company, Dundee Precious Metals. Environmental and Indigenous protesters have long been concerned that the project, located in a UNESCO Reserve, would affect the drinking water of local communities.

And this news for the health of our oceans: The ratification of the [High Seas Treaty](#), an “*historic milestone for ocean conservation*”, is an important step in protecting the area of the ocean beyond the boundaries of countries. These Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ’s) make up 2/3 of the total ocean area, hold great biodiversity, and are a critical part of the ocean-climate system.



GRAN Job Board -- Helping behind the scenes



Our GRAN Treasurer, Sue McKenna, is seeking support from a volunteer with Excel experience, to begin in January 2026. Can you help?

If you have any questions about what this commitment would involve, or are ready to say, “Yes, I’d love to do this,” please contact Sue at flatrock120@gmail.com.

Actions

United Nations Orange the World! This year’s campaign ***Orange the World: 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence*** from November 25th to December 10th, will focus on one of the fastest-growing forms of abuse: [digital violence against women and girls](#). Check out the [Ending Violence Against Women](#) page on the GRAN website for Orange Campaign resources. And be sure to send in photos of your activities for our 2025 Orange Campaign [photo gallery](#). Email them to us at info@grandmothersadvocacy.org.

Support the **Global Fund**. Use these links to send your postcard ([English](#) or [French](#)) and to make a [call to your MP](#).