



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

GRAN Update January 2026

This month we are featuring some beautiful photos from our new [website](#).

Change Starts with Water



Join us on **Wednesday, January 28th at 1:00 p.m. ET** as we launch our 2026 WASH Campaign with our first learning event of the year.

The United Nations has declared access to water and sanitation a human right, fundamental to health, dignity, and prosperity, and essential to the realization of all other rights. However, lack of sustainable and safe water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) remains one of the greatest global challenges facing low-income countries.

Progress has been slow. The world is not close to meeting [Sustainable Development Goal 6](#) by 2030: **“Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.”**

In this first Learning Event of the WASH campaign, guest speaker [Julie Truelove](#), Head of Policy and Advocacy for [WaterAid Canada](#), will provide us with an introduction to all things WASH and set the foundations for a new year of GRAN advocacy. We very much hope you will join us and invite your friends! [Click here](#) to register.

WASH Campaign Team Report *(Gail Mullan, Sandra Stec, Sandy Milakovic, Rae Yates --*

In addition to the above team members, Ruth Buckinger creates Small Sips and provides editing support, Phyllis Webster posts on GRAN's Facebook page, and Pat Dolan is our social media voice for other platforms.) Anyone interested in joining the WASH campaign team, our door is open! Please contact Gail at tgmullan@shaw.ca to find out more.)

The WASH Campaign Team has been busy developing a working partnership with [WaterAid Canada](#) and planning the first learning event with their generous help. The first *Small Sip* was sent out recently with more to come. For those who missed it, a link to this new series of *Small Sips* can always be found on our website on the [WASH Campaign page](#).

To broaden awareness of our WASH campaign, an invitation to our January 28th Learning Event and campaign launch was published in the [B.C. Council for International Cooperation](#)'s newsletter this month. We encourage GRANs to share the invitation with their own community networks and grannie groups. It is available [here](#).

February Fundraising Campaign – Can you help?



February is GRAN's fundraising month. Once a year, we raise funds for our work together. The donations support our advocacy efforts, our website, communications, and learning events, and also cover conference registrations and membership dues to our partner organizations. We also designate funds to support regional GRAN groups planning special events and outreach. We are proud to accomplish a lot on a shoestring budget! Once again, our goal this year is \$5000.

Please know that any donation, no matter the size, is greatly appreciated and gratefully accepted. You can donate by e-transfer, online with a credit card (through PayPal), or by cheque. [Click here](#) to go to our donations page for further information. Many thanks for all the many ways you contribute to the work of GRAN.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence



GRANs and partners met at Ottawa City Hall for the Mayor's Declaration of #16 Days.



Info table at Brighton Public Library set up by GRAN Northumberland

From November 25th to December 10th, GRANs and other activists participated in the UN's #16 Days of Activism to end Gender-Based Violence. According to the UN, violence against women and girls affects [one in three women](#) and is a human rights emergency. The 2025 campaign focused on one of the fastest-growing forms of abuse: digital violence against women and girls.



These Albert College students (Belleville, ON) in partnership with GRAN Quinte, showed their support for #16 Days, raising awareness through presentations, interactive displays, and a bake sale to raise funds for the [Three Oaks Foundation](#) which provides emergency shelter and services to women and their children experiencing domestic violence.

In Halton, Ontario, local television news covered the Ubuntu G2G gathering at City Hall. They were joined by several GRAN members. Watch the video clip [here](#).

Victoria GRANs gathered at the University of Victoria and handed out informative pamphlets along with purple ribbons. They found that connecting with the students to be very rewarding and reported a number of young men asking, "What can I do?" The students' reaction has encouraged the Victoria GRANs to return next year.

Thank you to all GRANs who worked in your communities to build partnerships, raise awareness, and speak out for the human rights of women and girls. For more photos of GRAN actions during the 16 Days, check out [our gallery](#).

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



January 24th is International Day of Education

The Education Watch Group is suggesting that GRANs take a moment to copy and paste some or all of the following paragraph into an email message to your Member of Parliament to help them understand the importance of the UN's [International Day of Education](#). Be sure to add a personal touch about why education is important to you.

Education is a human right, a public good, and a public responsibility. The right to education is enshrined in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The declaration calls for free and compulsory elementary education. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, goes further to stipulate that countries shall make higher education accessible to all. When it adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, the international community recognized that education is essential for the success of all 17 of its goals. Sustainable Development Goal 4, in particular, aims to “**ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**” by 2030. But about 244 million children and adolescents around the world are out of school; 617 million children and adolescents cannot read or do basic math; less than 40% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa complete lower secondary school; and some four million children and youth refugees are out of school. Their right to education is being violated and this is unacceptable.

The International Day of Education provides an opportunity for parliamentarians around the world to shine a light on education in their respective parliaments and take action to close the gap for those furthest behind. Your Member of Parliament could submit a question about education, asking what the government's policy is on achieving our targets to meet [Sustainable Development Goal 4](#), what its plans are for increasing Official Development Assistance (ODA), and whether they support the two important global funds for education - the [Global Partnership for Education](#) and [Education Cannot Wait](#). You might suggest one or more of these actions to them.

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

With the WASH campaign being GRAN's focus this year, the Health Watch Group will concentrate on the health effects of limited or no access to safe water and sanitation services. Sustainable Development Goal 6 declares the importance of achieving "clean water and sanitation for all". According to the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, 2.2 billion people lacked safely managed drinking water, 3.4 billion went without safely managed sanitation, and 1.7 billion lacked basic hygiene services at home in 2024.

Lack of safe drinking water continues to be a problem for Indigenous communities in Canada. While there has been progress in recent years, there are still 38 long-term drinking water advisories in 36 First Nations communities, meaning that people must boil their tap water before drinking it to sterilize it.¹

Cholera continued to be a severe health crisis in Africa during 2025, with the Africa CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) calling it the continent's worst outbreak in 25 years. Hundreds of thousands of cases and thousands of deaths were seen across multiple countries, including Angola, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya, driven by poor WASH infrastructure, climate change, conflict, and displacement, despite vaccination efforts.



A new clinical trial by a team of scientists and physicians at Mass General Brigham in Boston shows promising results for PanChol, a single-dose oral vaccine aimed at the up to 4 million annual cholera cases worldwide. An additional Phase I trial of PanChol will begin in Lusaka, Zambia sometime in early 2026 to test the vaccine in places where cholera is endemic.

Read: [Stopping Cholera in Its Tracks](#) to witness how the humanitarian organization Medair tackled a cholera outbreak in South Sudan and learn the multiple steps that were needed to stop cholera in its tracks: treatment, vaccines, hygiene kits, education, and investment in water and sanitation infrastructure.

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

The current race to exploit resources will have huge impacts on human rights and the environment. However, we are inspired by the work of like-minded organizations worldwide, and by people (many of them women), such as those in the message below, to keep advocating for what we know is right.



Water defenders from the Peaceful Resistance La Puya, just north of Guatemala City, recently celebrated an important victory. On December 23rd, an arbitration panel at the World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes ruled against Nevada-based Kappes, Cassiday, and Associates (KCA). Formerly owned by the Canadian-based mining company, Radius Gold, KCA had made a nearly half a billion-dollar arbitration claim against Guatemala.

Through trade agreements, rules in favour of investors allow transnational corporations to sue governments for actions they claim affect their investments, making governments and communities vulnerable to exploitation.

As stated in the communique by La Puya: *"This arbitration began in 2018 because the company and previous Guatemalan government administrations failed to respect the will of the population (of the Maya Kaqchikil and Xinka people) and their rejection of precious metal mining in defense of life, water, and territory. The result of this violation by the State in collusion with KCA has been conflict, local discord, intimidation, repression, and criminalization of the communities in resistance..."*

Read more [here](#).

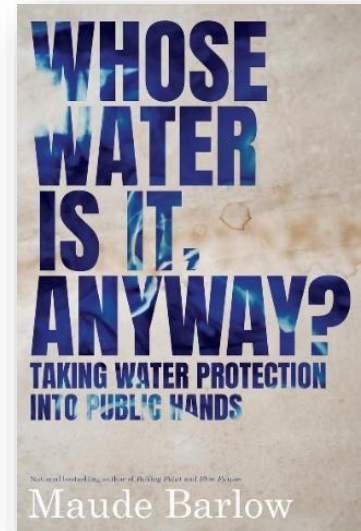
Book Corner

Maude Barlow, bestselling Canadian author and activist, explores the urgent need for water protection in a world that is running out of fresh water. In her book, [*Whose Water is it Anyway?*](#), she explores how the [Blue Communities Project](#) gives people tools they can use to protect water.

"Maude Barlow is one of our planet's greatest water defenders." — Naomi Klein, bestselling author of *This Changes Everything* and *The Shock Doctrine*

"This book is a blueprint for communities around the world to take back that responsibility and maintain water as a human right." — David Suzuki

"This is a must-read." — Jane Fonda



Action | News | Events

Send an email to your MP in advance of International Day of Education on January 24. Urge Canada to continue to invest in quality education for all. See the Education Watch Group report above for details.

"U.S. Goes Rogue" is the headline from a CAN International Press Release, which provides reaction to news that the U.S. is withdrawing from many international organizations. You can read more [here](#).

Given reports that have just come to light that the [AI application "Grok"](#) on the social media platform "X", allows users to create and post sexualized deep-fake images of women and children without their consent, GRAN is seriously considering closing our "X" account. Stay tuned for more info and possible actions you can take demanding that the Canadian government address this online abuse immediately.

Register [here](#) for the first Learning Event and launch of our WASH campaign, featuring Julie Truelove of WaterAid Canada, taking place January 28th at 1 p.m. ET.

Beginning in February, [Climate Action for Lifelong Learners \(CALL\)](#) is delivering an eight-week climate course designed to get participants up to date on the latest climate science. More details [here](#).

"Hope is a revolutionary patience."

-- Dorothee Soelle