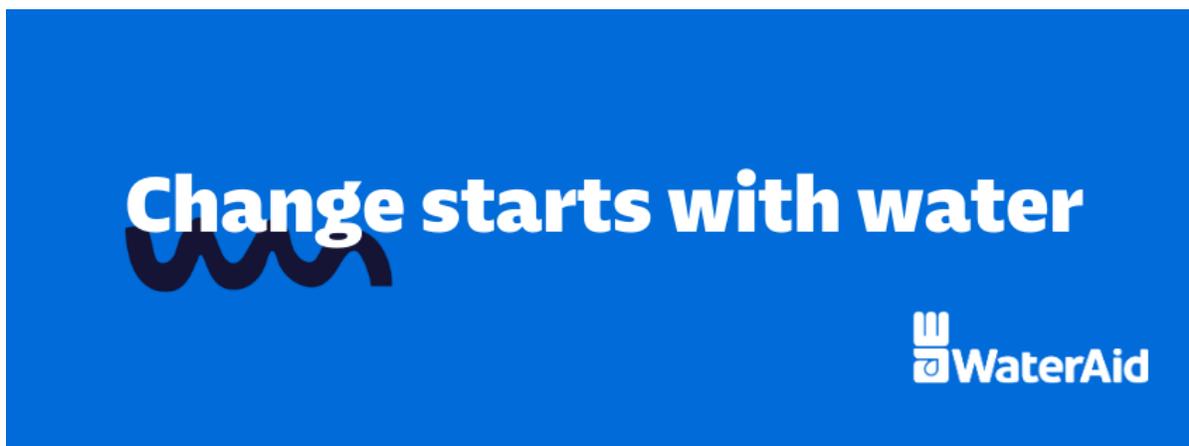




Advocating for the human rights of older women
Défense des droits de la personne des femmes âgées

GRAN Update February 2026



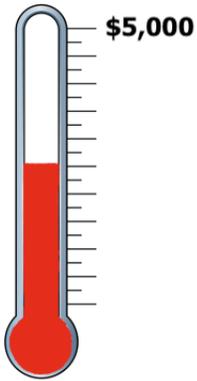
WASH Campaign (Sandy Milakovic, Sandra Stec, Rae Yates, Susan McNamara, Gail Mullan)

GRAN's WASH Campaign kicked off on January 28th with a webinar, *Change Starts with Water*, with guest speakers Julie Truelove and Adnan Qader from [WaterAid Canada](#). It was an engaging and info-packed hour that helped set the foundations for our year of advocacy on access to clean water, decent toilets, and good hygiene. If you missed it, you can access a recording of the webinar [here](#). The first two *Small Sips* introducing WASH have gone out to GRAN members. Remember, if you miss any in the series, or want to go back and find a previous one, you can always access them on the [WASH Campaign page](#) of our website. The team has created this [bilingual WASH Leave Behind](#) that can be used to educate the public and our MPs. (With many thanks to GRANs Lynne Latulippe and Suzanne Dufresne for their French translation services!) The WASH team is currently working on a timeline of events and actions for the coming year and developing resources for International Women's Day on March 8th and World Water Day on March 22nd.

We are focusing attention this month on the lack of access to clean water and sanitation for many Indigenous communities in Canada. You should have recently received the *Small Sip* [WASH in Canada](#) to help strengthen your understanding of the shameful conditions in parts of this country. Expect a GRAN Action email in your inbox next week focused on [Bill C-61](#), The First Nations Clean Water Act. We will be urging our government to re-introduce the bill and get it passed without delay.

February Fundraising

GOAL!



GRANs, halfway through the month we are more than halfway to our \$5000 goal! Thank you to all those who have already donated.

As you know, financial donations from GRANs and friends are the only source of revenue for GRAN. While much of our work happens through the generous volunteer hours of hundreds of GRANs across the country, a modest budget is still needed to support GRAN communications and learning events, maintain our website, and cover annual membership dues in partner organizations. Once a year we reach out and ask, "Can you help?" and you have always responded generously. Thank you.

You can donate by e-transfer, online using a credit card through PayPal, or by cheque. [Click here](#) to access our donations page for further information.

Happening Soon! Film Screening and Q&A



On **Sunday, February 22** at 3:00 p.m. ET, join [Khouri Conversations](#) and [Conversations Without Walls](#) for a free online screening of [Aisha's Story](#). This is an award-winning 2025 documentary film by Elizabeth Vibert and Salam Barakat Guenette that profiles Palestinian grain miller Aisha Azzam as she safeguards her culture in a refugee camp. Aisha Azzam and her husband started their family grain mill in Baqa'a refugee camp, Jordan, 35 years ago. She

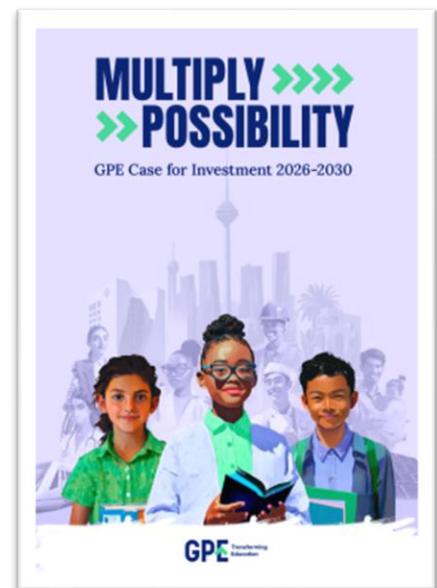
treasures her role in safeguarding culture by milling the wheat, grains, and herbs essential to Palestinian cuisine. Through food, Aisha traces the story of Palestinian displacement and rebuilding family and community in a refugee camp. Harvesting, milling, cooking, and feasts ground the film's arc of displacement, longing, and resistance. After the film screening, there will time for a discussion and Q&A where you can ask questions of Elizabeth and Salam and dive deeper into Aisha's story. [Click here](#) to register.

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

Representatives from forty-two countries met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in November to talk about how African institutions can work together to improve education on the continent through sharing of ideas, data collection, and working on system transformation. Many African countries are focused on the following: Expanding pre-primary education to prepare children to learn; strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy; improving teaching quality and workforce management; reducing disparities and enhancing school safety; and promoting effective governance and resource management, with gender equality integrated across reforms. Read highlights from the meeting in Addis Ababa [here](#).

Similar ideas were also shared with members of Global Affairs Canada (GAC) by CSOs such as CIEPWG (Canadian International Education Policy Working Group) who reinforced the importance of Canada's financial contribution to global education funds such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW). This is especially critical now because ECW has been defunded by the US. Read the case for investing in education [here](#).

The Global Partnership for Education has created a 5-question online quiz, [How Education Pays Off](#), so you can test your knowledge and discover how education delivers exceptional returns for people, economies and countries. We encourage you to take it! How did you do? What did you learn? Let Phyllis know at nudgeccm@yahoo.ca !



Many sincere thanks from the Education Watch Group to all GRANs who sent letters to their Members of Parliament for International Education Day, January 24, urging Canada to continue to invest in quality education for all.

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

Action: Results Canada has just launched their **Born to Thrive** campaign in support of investment in the [Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents \(GFF\)](#). The GFF is a country-led partnership, hosted at the World Bank, that fights poverty and inequity by advancing the health and rights of women, children and adolescents. It does this by supporting countries to strengthen health systems and improve access to quality care. Ensuring quality health services includes improving WASH services for both patients and healthcare workers. Results Canada is asking us to contact our MPs urging Canada to continue its longstanding support for the GFF with an increased pledge for 2026-2030 to help women and children survive and thrive. See the **Actions** box on the last page for more info.

Webinar: Access to health: Strengthening transparency, accountability and inclusion in service delivery – Thursday, March 5 | 9:00 – 10:30 ET | Corruption and discrimination are major obstacles to achieving sustainable and inclusive development. They fuel inequalities in accessing essential services, reduce public resources, and create barriers to effectively allocate money for education and healthcare. For women, girls, and groups most at risk of discrimination, the impacts are significant. This webinar is being offered by [Transparency International Canada](#) and the [Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health \(CanwaCH\)](#) as part of the [Inclusive Service Delivery Africa \(ISDA\)](#) project. This four-year project, funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) is implemented in Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ghana to address governance-related barriers to access in education and health care. [Click here](#) for more information and registration link.

The Health Watch group will continue to focus on ways to support the WASH Campaign this year. They are exploring ideas for a health-focused WASH learning event and have been discussing WASH issues here at home in Canada, including the necessity of reintroducing Bill C-61 (see WASH report above), and the health impacts of oil and gas fracking on water sources across Western Canada.

Mining Justice (Liz Dill, Anne Young, Gail Frances Alexander, Diane Scaletta, Phyllis Webster, JoAnn Mulhern)

Along with other national and international human rights and environmental organizations, GRAN advocates for a Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE).

This month the Mining Justice group is sharing two reports on the activities of Canadian businesses. As you dig into them, the Watch Group encourages you to hold in mind the following words of Minister François-Philippe Champagne: ***“To fly the maple leaf means something. It means being associated with a set of values. This is an extraordinary brand to have in the world today, but it comes with responsibilities.”***

Canadian Businesses Profiting from the Trump administration’s Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations in the US: Independent journalist Rachel Gilmore reports on Canadian companies who have open or recent contracts with the US Department of Homeland Security. The companies listed include: Garda World, JSI Telecom, Hootsuite, Roshel, Thomson Reuters, Magnet Forensics, ICOR Technology Inc., CGI Inc. and Jim Pattison Developments. Read (or listen to) her full report [here](#).

Canadian Mining Companies Abroad:

Mining Watch Canada has 26 years of experience in providing solidarity and support to Indigenous peoples and communities defending their environmental and human rights, including civil and political rights, from multinational mining by Canadian companies.

Mining Watch Canada’s submission in advance of the seventh Periodic Review of Canada by the UN Human Rights Committee, states that: ***“Canada fails to protect human rights abused by Canadian mining companies operating overseas and fails to provide effective remedy in Canada for those whose rights have been violated by Canadian mining companies operating abroad.”***

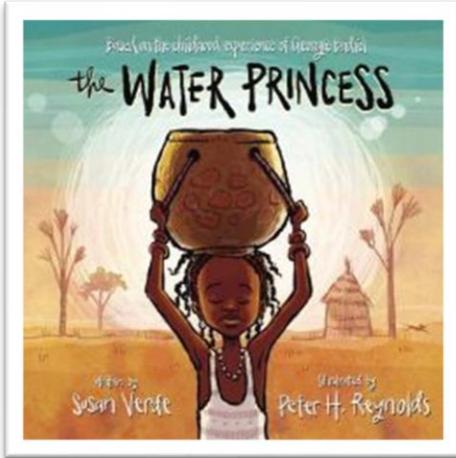


Mining Watch makes two major recommendations in its submission to protect the rights of those who have been harmed by a Canadian company operating overseas:

- The Office of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) must be maintained. A new Ombudsperson must be appointed and be granted the powers to compel witnesses and evidence.
- The Government of Canada must enact binding human rights and environmental due diligence legislation applicable to Canadian corporations operating abroad requiring them to identify, prevent, mitigate, and address adverse impacts throughout their operations and supply chains; and legislation that allows foreign plaintiffs who allege harm caused or contributed to by a Canadian company, or its global subsidiaries and business relations, to have their case considered in a Canadian court.

You can read the complete Mining Watch Canada submission [here](#).

Book Corner

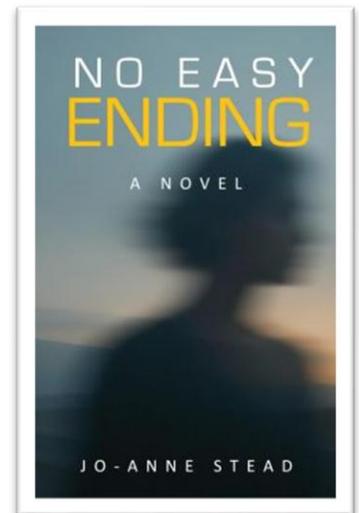


The Water Princess tells the story of the daily walk for water by a young girl named Gie Gie, inspired by the childhood experiences of African-born model Georgie Badiel. As a child in Burkina Faso, Georgie and the other girls in her village had to walk for miles each day to collect water. This vibrant, engaging picture book sheds light on this struggle that continues in too many places around the world today and instills hope for a future when all children will have access to clean drinking water.

Share this book with the young children in your life. You can hear it read aloud [here](#) and follow the beautiful illustrations by award-winning author/illustrator Peter H. Reynolds.

No Easy Ending -- We encourage you to check out this novel by Ottawa-Gatineau GRAN member Jo-Anne Stead. The book is available in paperback and on Kindle at [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca). Congratulations, Jo-Anne, on this accomplishment!

Synopsis: Earth is changing faster than anyone expected -- forests burning, farmland turning to dust, and oceans swallowing coastlines, forcing survivors into overcrowded cities. To keep society from collapsing, the government issues some drastic measures, including a personal death date for everyone, to ration resources and control the population. Norah, the protagonist, an older woman and a journalist, leads a small group of resisters who want to change the government policies. Balancing growing protests, clandestine farmers, and secrets and sacrifices among her family and friends, Norah refuses to back down, determined to continue to push for change—even if there's no guarantee it will be enough in the end.



Actions

Support Results Canada's **Born to Thrive** campaign: Contact your MP, urging Canada to continue its longstanding support for the Global Financing Facility (GFF) with an increased pledge for 2026-2030 to help women and children survive and thrive. [Click here](#) for more details about this call to action.

Watch for a GRAN Action email coming next week in support of [Bill C-61](#) The First Nations Clean Water Act.