

The **Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign** seeks to raise awareness and mobilize support in Canada for Africa's grandmothers. The campaign was launched by the Stephen Lewis Foundation on March 7, 2006, on the eve of International Women's Day.



Aids is a terrible burden being borne by African grandmothers who are sustaining the orphans and communities of so much of the continent.

In some schools 70% of the children are orphans; it is symptomatic of what is happening across the continent as the death rate accelerates. And there are situations where grandmothers are looking after 5, 10, 15, 20 kids — their own, and other orphans in the villages who have no environment within which to exist.. They are entirely impoverished; there is virtually no food, sometimes no shelter, certainly no money for school fees to get the children into school. But somehow these unsung heroes of Africa hold the continent together: they are holding countries and communities together. The grandmothers have emerged as a central force on the continent.

In many African countries, 10-15% of the *total* population will be orphaned by the year 2010. As the pandemic intensifies, we are seeing a growing number of child-headed households in which children as young as eight assume the tremendous burden of caring for younger siblings.

SLF supports more than 100 grassroots projects in 14 sub-Saharan African countries. We assist orphans and other AIDS affected persons/

SLF support provides a “shift from crying, darkness and fear to strength and insight”.

In March 2006, on the eve of International Women's Day, the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) launched the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign. The goal is to raise awareness and mobilize support for Africa's grandmothers and their struggle to secure a hopeful and healthy future for themselves and their orphaned grandchildren .Through the campaign, SLF provides grandmothers in Africa with much-needed assistance, including: food, school fees and school uniforms for their grandchildren, income-generating projects, counseling and social support, and coffins to allow for a dignified burial of their loved ones.

The Grandmothers' Gathering, hosted by the Stephen Lewis Foundation, took place in Toronto on August 11-13th, 2006. The Gathering brought together grandmothers and project facilitators from 11 countries in sub-Saharan Africa where the Stephen Lewis Foundation supports projects

Grandmothers' Objectives

The Grandmothers to Grandmothers Gathering had three major objectives:

For the grandmothers from across southern Africa to have a forum where they can speak as the experts about their experiences living with the HIV/AIDS epidemic – to articulate their needs and set the agenda for support and mobilization;

For Canadian grandmothers to engage directly with African participants about their situation, and for this to inform their work across the country – organizing, raising awareness and funds, and calling for action;

For grandmothers in Africa and Canada to build a solidarity movement, informed by the voices of African women, which will assist African grandmothers in obtaining the support needed to secure a hopeful and healthy future for themselves and their orphan grandchildren.

COUNTRIES INVOLVED:

Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland; Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe,

ACTION

Since the launch, more than 150 **groups of Canadian grandmothers** have taken up the call to action and together have risen over \$1 million for the campaign. SLF directs these funds to community-level organizations in 14 sub-Saharan African countries that provide grandmothers with much needed support, such as food, housing grants, school fees for their grandchildren and grief counseling.

-To safeguard the health of our grandchildren and of ourselves; enough to put food in their mouths, roofs over their heads and clothes on their backs;

-To place them in school and keep them there long enough to secure their futures.

-To train women (grandmothers), with skills for parenting grandchildren who are bereaved, impoverished, confused and extremely vulnerable.

<http://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org>

Campaign Goals

The '**Grandmothers to Grandmothers' campaign** aims to:

Encourage awareness in Canada about Africa's grandmothers and their struggle to secure a hopeful and healthy future for generations of children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS;

Build solidarity amongst African and Canadian grandmothers in the fight against HIV/AIDS;

Actively support groups of grandmothers in Africa who are dealing with the painful loss of their own children and struggling to care for AIDS orphans. Funds will provide grandmothers with much needed assistance, for example: food, school fees and school uniforms for their grandchildren, income-generating projects, counseling and social support, and coffins to allow for a dignified burial of their loved ones.

CALL TO ACTION

We have so much to give – so many resources, such a relative abundance of time, so much access, so much influence, so much empathy and compassion. We recognize that our African friends are consumed each day with the business of surviving, and so we have offered – and they have accepted – the loan of our voices. We pledge to act as their ambassadors, raising the volume on their long suppressed stories until they are heard, understood and acted upon. We promise to apply pressure on governments, on religious leaders, and on the international community. We are committed to mobilizing funds, and recruiting more ambassadors among our sisters in Canada.

Start or join a grandmothers' group – Grandmothers are agents for change in their communities and grandmother groups are springing up across Canada. See examples of how other Canadian grandmothers have mobilized or visit the **Share Ideas** section of the website.

Donate – Grandmothers play a crucial role in many projects we fund related to orphans and people living with AIDS. The Foundation can act as a vehicle to support grandmothers in Africa and increased funding would allow us to reach so many more. To make a **donation** in support of the campaign, you can donate online, by phone or simply make out a cheque to the Stephen Lewis Foundation and write "Grandmothers" in the memo line of your cheque.

Plan an event —to learn more about how to plan an event to raise awareness and funds for African grandmothers in their fight against HIV/AIDS, benefiting the Stephen Lewis Foundation check the website. To see what other 'giving grannies' are doing in their communities, visit their **Share Ideas** section

How to Get Involved

- Join a grandmothers' group or start your own
- Hold a fundraising event in your community
- Screen the film *Grandmothers: The Unsung Heroes of Africa*
- Sign up to receive campaign bulletins
- Learn more by visiting our website

Women, men, children of all ages are contributing materials, stitches, funds, time to make the quilts. Some people are making small patches, not squares. They may do some stitches on a patch, or on a square. They may make one square. They may make many squares. Some will make a whole quilt. They are people like you and like me who see this as a worthy, do-able project we want to participate in out of love. We can pass this information on to others, and by all means ask them to continue passing it on. Soon there will be many people, in many places, making bits and pieces for the quilts. This is a pass-it-on project. Remember, a quilt may be that: a quilt. No embellishment. A lovely quilt, plain and simple. Or it may be embellished with special threads, beads, sequins. However, plain or with add-ons, the funds from each quilt will go to embellish and add to the lives of the children and grandmothers who care for them. What a wonderful thing we can do for these worthy people we may never meet.

100% cotton

The squares will be 9 ½ inches X 9 ½ inches

The outside ½ inch of each square will be an unsown border. This will be the material you or others will use to sew squares to each other

You will either pass your squares on to someone else in your area who will make another or more squares to be added to yours

or send them to a quilter/assembler or quilters' group who has/have agreed to make more squares to add to yours, or who has/have agreed to assemble squares into a quilt and complete the entire quilt

Your piece may go in with bits from England, Scotland, Africa, Quebec, British Columbia, or one of the States! We will all get to the same place, but there will be many, many quilts to auction in the end.

We ask you to PLEASE *take photos of your work in progress. And take photos of each other at any and all phases of the work.* Show us your triumphs. Show us your work spaces. Show us your friends and families. Tell us your:

full names

birthdates

addresses

phone numbers

emails

If you have funny or good stories to tell about the process of making the quilts, please send them to us.

We will keep track of all this information, along with your photos that you send us when you send the pieces you have completed. If you are in a region where others are also making quilts, you may decide to keep the finished quilts and to send the information about the quilts, photos, and let us keep those in the records of achievements. Then your quilts will be sold in your region. More to follow on that as we get closer to the date for sales. *Keep a log* of all activities and people who work on the quilt project so that history can be written about it all.