



Enriching Lives in Africa and Canada

*The quality handmade totes and little purses are available at
Twiga Ethnic Adornments, North Vancouver;
Fancy This Gift, Ladner;
Giving Gifts & Company, Vancouver,
and Eden Accents, New Westminster.*

Greater Van Gogos signature tote bags, one of the crafts for sale at Robson Square on November 22

Photo credit: Jane Farrow/SLF

Grandmothers are at the heart of a campaign that spans two continents.

I am one of some 8000 Canadian grandmothers and grand others who volunteer for the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, part of the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF).

More than a fundraising campaign, Grandmothers to Grandmothers is a movement. We are drawn together by love for our grandchildren and commitment to human rights. In Africa, grandmothers raise millions of children orphaned by AIDS. In Canada, we raise awareness and funds.

African grandmothers, experiencing profound loss, have little time to grieve. They struggle to earn money, to deal with their own deteriorating health, to bridge the generation gap, and to help their grandchildren work through the trauma of losing their parents.

The Campaign is unique. African grandmothers know what they need and direct their own projects.

The Grandmothers Campaign is a model of human rights fundraising using the principles of social justice. More than \$21 million has been raised to pay for necessities such as school fees and uniforms, food, visits from home care workers, adequate housing, and microcredit grants for income generation. In 15 African countries, communities are helping

- children stay in school,
- grandmothers to be self-sufficient, and
- families gain access to nutrition, health care, and counselling.

The Campaign is unique. African grandmothers know what they need

and direct their own projects. Similarly, Canadian grandmothers form groups and decide on their own fundraising and awareness-raising activities. We share hope for a healthy future while promoting the image of elder women as dynamic, competent, forward-thinking, intelligent, compassionate, and creative members of society.

SLF partners

Gender inequity drives the AIDS pandemic. Partnerships between community-based organizations and the SLF bring about life-changing results. For example, Rwanda Women's Network (RWN) is an organization that formed as a result of the increased spread of HIV/AIDS, largely because of targeted sexual violence in the wake of the 1994 genocide. RWN runs four centres in Rwanda focusing on community resources such as advice on the importance of writing Wills, assisting with Will preparation if requested, and securing women's land rights.



Photo credit: Cathie Archbould/SLF

African grandmothers are welcomed to Vancouver, September 2013, for African Grandmothers Tribunal.



Photo credit: Alexis MacDonald/SLF

Paralegals trained by RWN participate in educational dramas.

RWN has developed a unique initiative that trains paralegals to perform a variety of dramas that educate and advise women about the law and their human rights. The paralegals, who are volunteers,

- report human rights violations to the respective authorities and monitor progress;
- explain the law that states that Rwandan women can now inherit property (families may not understand that because it wasn't always so);
- are trained to protect and respect grandmothers' inheritance rights, a process that's often a healing for a family or a community in conflict; and
- are part of a general commitment to community support and community action.

African Grandmothers Tribunal

In September 2013, I participated in welcoming grandmothers from Africa to a people's tribunal in Vancouver hosted by the SLF. I am inspired by the women who testified about issues such as property grabbing, loss of housing, sexual violence, and lack of food and income. One of the results is that African grandmothers are now able to call on their own governments, the international community, and donors to protect, promote, and enforce their human rights, empowering them to take a leading role in developing policies and programs to turn the tide of AIDS. <http://africangrandmothertribunal.org/report/>

Gogo means grandmother in Zulu.

Greater Van Gogos

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Women with experience of all kinds are welcome in our groups, which also offer opportunities to learn new skills. We help start new groups and will send trained speakers to private and community events. You don't have to be a grandmother to join!

Hand in Hand: Justice for African Grandmothers

November 22, 2014
10 AM to 4 PM

Greater Van Gogos will host a fundraising event at Robson Square, Vancouver. Handmade and fair-trade items will be available for purchase all day. The film, *African Grandmothers Tribunal: seeking justice at the frontlines of the AIDS crisis*, will be



Photo credit: Cathie Archbould/SLF

Stephen Lewis with a few Greater Van Gogos at the African Grandmothers Tribunal

premiered in the theatre at 1 PM and 3 PM. Guest speaker is Ilana Landsberg-Lewis, SLF Executive Director. The program will include Children's entertainment. More information: www.greatervangogos.org.

Charitable Giving

- Legal professionals throughout Canada support the work of organizations such as RWN through Give a Day, a grassroots response that involves giving 1 day's pay to an organization that will use the money well in the fight against HIV.
- The SLF sends 90 percent of donations to the Grandmothers Campaign directly to partner projects in Africa serving grandmothers and the children in their care

For more information or to become a monthly donor, contact the SLF about planned giving. ▲

www.stephenlewisfoundation.org

Hannah Diamond has volunteered for the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign since it began in 2006. In 2010 she was one of 42 Canadian women and 500 African women who attended the first African grandmothers gathering in Swaziland. She is currently co-chair of Greater Van Gogos, a network of 25 groups in Metro Vancouver and its surrounding communities.

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