



Gathering Workshop Descriptions

Reprinted directly from the Grandmothers' Gathering programme.

A Grandmother's Life in Zambia: Coping with HIV/AIDS and Poverty

This workshop will give some insight into the lives of grandmothers in Zambia before and after the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. Participants will explore, individually and collectively, how their skills and knowledge can help them cope personally, and help their families and sister grandmothers. Small groups will present their findings to the workshop and together will develop ideas for action to bring home. This workshop will feature games and songs to help participants get to know each other.

A Tale of Hope and Development in an Environment of Poverty, Sickness and Death

At this workshop, grandmothers will share stories about the deaths of their children, their feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, and their subsequent leadership roles in the fight against the effects of the AIDS epidemic in their communities. The presenters were founding members of Grandmothers Against Poverty and AIDS (GAPA) and will describe its progress, successes and lessons learned — offering a blueprint for intervention for grandmothers living in similar environments. The workshop will incorporate drama, singing and visual aids, to showcase a positive African spirit.

Build With What You've Got to Promote Networking and Cooperation

This workshop will look at the impact of cooperation, networking and communication on the success of development projects. The workshop includes facilitated exercises with four groups of 6–8 participants, followed by a discussion and sharing of information. Boxes of assorted materials such as pieces of cloth, coloured paper, pipes, tools, sticks, bottles, and tins will be used for the exercises.

Building a Functional Community of Grandmothers and their Dependents — A Road to Meaningful and Sustainable Livelihood

Grandmothers have proven to be committed, loving and effective caretakers of orphans, dependents and their sick children. However, many of them have little or no education, and limited access to medical care and other social services. These obstacles reduce their visibility in society and their involvement in community development and service delivery. That's why it is imperative that strong networks of grandmothers and their dependents are nurtured and supported. In this workshop, we will discuss culturally appropriate means, skills and knowledge to mobilize and organize influential and durable action groups.

Building Resilience in Children and Older Caregivers/Grandmothers

AIDS orphans can lose their home, self-image, material well-being and even their status as a child. They are often cared for by grandmothers and other elderly relatives who do not have the knowledge or skills to deal with a child's complex emotions in a time of loss. However, older caregivers have great life-experience and wisdom, and helping their grandchildren build resilience and cope with their loss in turn builds self-esteem and resilience in the grandmother/caregiver. This highly-interactive workshop includes short presentations and activities that develop simple behavioural and communication skills. Grandmothers will learn how to make Memory Books and Memory Boxes.

Caring for Children Living with HIV/AIDS

This workshop will begin with a grandmother's story and role play about caring for HIV-positive grandchildren. The second part will feature a presentation by a professional on how to care for children living with HIV. Topics will include: how to monitor growth, promote nutrition, treat infections, get immunizations, and provide ongoing psychosocial support for the child and the caregiver. The workshop will conclude with a question and answer session.

Challenges Faced by Grandmothers in Northern Uganda: A Case of the Acet Internally Displaced Peoples Camp (IDP)

This workshop begins with a brief description of the TII KI KOMI women's group by its Chairperson and founder, Balbina Akidi Okot, followed by a story

from Santina Akello, a 71 year-old grandmother, about the challenges she faces caring for twenty orphans and vulnerable children. There will also be a video depicting a typical day in the life of the Acet IDP inhabitants, after which participants will form small discussion groups to identify positive coping strategies and lessons learned. The workshop will finish with miming an Acholi traditional dance.

Challenges for Grannies

Grannies, especially those caring for orphans, lack financial and social support, and the resources to meet their own needs, along with those of the children they sustain. Moreover, they are already battling challenges related to gender and age discrimination. This workshop will discuss how to help grandmothers gain access to their legal and social rights, including social protection programmes and other entitlements, such as property inheritance, child welfare grants, access to education, health care and other social services.

Challenges and Coping Strategies Around Lack of Food, Clothing, Housing and School Fees

This workshop looks at how to put together and launch a campaign that provides long-term, sustainable material support (including food, clothing, housing and school fees) for children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS and their African grandmothers. Such a campaign would enable grandmothers and programme managers to develop skills and apply the principles of sustainability in self-help programmes, using principles of problem analysis, planning and implementation, financial and human resource development, and

project monitoring and evaluation.

Counselling and the Put-Down Syndrome

This workshop looks at the effects of counselling and the 'Put-Down Syndrome' on orphaned children. The 'Put-Down Syndrome' is what orphans experience when they are constantly told they are inferior or lazy, comments that often come from teachers who lack understanding or empathy for the child's situation. At the Friends of Claude Ho in Thylolo Association (FOCHTA), counsellors try to show orphans that people care for them and understand the almost insurmountable problems orphans face every day.

Dealing with Depression and Grief

In this workshop, the GoGo Grannies from Alex township, South Africa will talk about the journey they have taken as grandmothers dealing with the impact of HIV and AIDS. They will be sharing their specific experiences and what they have learned about supporting each other over the years. The workshop will also identify stages and steps of grief.

Facing the Challenge: KWOSP Grannies Experiences

This workshop looks at the experiences of the grannies affiliated with the Kenya Widows and Orphans Support Programme (KWOSP). It will be divided into three sessions: 1) grannies living with AIDS and struggling to meet the basic needs of the orphans under their care; 2) leadership in old age; and 3) stigma, discrimination and cultural beliefs.

Family: Including issues of orphans and the Elderly

St. Francis Health Care Centre works to bring together mentors in the community with children affected by HIV/AIDS. The aim is for the mentors to create a sense of belonging and provide guidance to these children after their parents die. This workshop will explore the programme model run by the Centre in Uganda, with recommendations on dealing with orphans and the elderly in the context of HIV/AIDS, including issues related to reproductive health.

GAPA: The Way Forward

Mandisa Mafuya, a member of Grandmothers Against Poverty and AIDS (GAPA), will facilitate this workshop. Topics will include: how grandmothers cope with the growing numbers of deaths and HIV infections in their communities, the growing network of grandmothers, strategies on coping with death and traditional rituals in South Africa. Other topics that may be discussed include caring for the sick (from a non-medical perspective), and the care of orphan grandchildren.

Grandmothers Forgotten

This workshop will discuss the position of grandmothers in the community and the challenges they face in caring for orphaned grandchildren. The session will focus on the grandmothers' struggle to provide food, clothing, housing and school fees (amongst other things) for the growing number of orphans under their care, without encouragement or support from society. The workshop will also explore how society can support grandmothers' changing roles so that they can provide for the orphans under their care.

Grandmothers: A World of Hope

Grandmothers have come to symbolize a world of hope for countless numbers of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. If grandmothers were not available, what would have become of the children of our children? This workshop begins with an introduction and a short skit followed by brief testimonials by two grandmothers on the theme "Grandmothers: A World of Hope." The session concludes with a short mimed skit demonstrating hope for the future.

Grandmothers Lobby to Put an End to AIDS in Africa

The workshop will begin with a short presentation on lobbying and advocacy followed by a discussion of grandmothers' personal experiences with lobbying. Participants will then break into three groups and work with one of the following: 1) Canada's commitment to AIDS in Africa and lobbying for the 0.7%. 2) Lobbying for the proposed International Women's Agency; 3) Using role play to prepare a presentation to the Canadian federal government. A committee will then be struck to ensure follow-up after the Gathering.

Grannies Make Cents—A Joyous Partnership

The Wakefield Go-Gos will describe, in words and with a slideshow presentation, how they formed one of the first grannies' groups in Canada and were able to engage their community in various fundraising events. Participants will be asked to identify their own fundraising ideas, and will have an opportunity to develop a communications or publicity strategy.

Grief Counselling for Grandmothers and Children Under Their Care

This workshop will help grannies understand the stages of grief as well as the different reactions to bereavement, types of grief, factors influencing the magnitude of grief and reasons why grannies or grandchildren may experience a failure to grieve. The workshop will include role play, discussions, and information on the need for grief counselling and the different methods of assisting a grieving person/child. The workshop will use various learning aids such as stones, photographs, flowers of different colours, symbolic pet pictures, books, newspapers, money and clothing.

Grieving and Mourning in Children

This workshop will explore the concept of bereavement and the grieving process of children. The session aims to foster a greater understanding of the stages of grieving so that caregivers / grandmothers will be better able to understand and support the child as they cope with their loss. The workshop will include practical tasks for dealing with grief.

Health and Education for Orphans and the Role of Grannies

This workshop — using the experiences of grandmothers — will combine a presentation, role playing, and plenary discussion on how four regions (Canada, Europe, Africa and Asia) define the health and educational needs of children. Participants will then break into four groups to discuss challenges and possible recommendations for addressing those challenges. The workshop will end with a song from the grandmothers and a call for future workshops on this issue.

Health Issues

In June 2006, the UN adopted a Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS that commits governments to provide support to older people in their role as caregivers. However, the declaration fails to recognize that a substantial proportion of adults living with HIV are 50 years and older. This workshop will explore the situation of African grandmothers in terms of their own health, their HIV status, prevention of transmission and treatment. We will also discuss the need for financial aid to grandmother caregivers, especially those who are infected themselves.

HIV and AIDS Introduction

This workshop will focus on how grandmothers can take care of themselves and how grannies can contract HIV. Discussions will include: precautions that can be taken to prevent HIV transmission, the differences between hospitals/clinics vs. traditional healers, teaching in our communities, and understanding how to use prophylactics.

HIV/AIDS Introduction: Understanding the Impact of AIDS

The aim of this workshop is to convey key elements related to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, including: the three waves of the epidemic, HIV illness and death associated with AIDS, and the impact of HIV/AIDS. Following the presentation, participants will break into groups to discuss ways forward and establish priorities for future action.

Human Rights Voices

The workshop will present several stories of women who have worked for human rights in their areas, with a particular emphasis on the rights of orphans and grandmothers. There will be opportunities for the people in attendance to share their own stories.

Interactive Storytelling as a Community Builder and Revival

In this workshop, participants will share stories that are rooted in African traditions and have universal applicability. Participants will act out characters and analyze the setting, the theme, the problem and the solution — highlighting positive values and how the stories relate to everyday life in our communities.

Lighting the Fire!

This workshop will focus on how to mobilize a community for fundraising activities, based on the experiences of the York Region Committee in Support of the Stephen Lewis Foundation's "If I Had a Million Dollars Campaign" to raise funds and awareness of the AIDS pandemic in Africa. The session will provide ideas and concrete examples of what worked and what didn't work during our campaign. It will also focus on the connection between Grandmothers and youth. The workshop includes a PowerPoint presentation and two short videos.

Older Carers Need Time to Relax and Interact with Peers for Effective OVC Support

The workshop will talk about the benefits of the group process as a means of alleviating stress and providing social support. As caregivers, grandmothers need time to relax and interact with their peers for effective support. This workshop aims to help the grannies appreciate the value of sharing with friends as a means of relief and healing, so that they can better look after the orphans in their care.

Playback Theatre: Trading Our Stories

Playback Theatre is a form of improvisational theatre where the teller of the story, the actors and the audience are all part of a mutual sharing. We get to experience how our stories link to one another, weaving us all into the same cloth. Participants will begin the workshop with some simple warm up exercises. Then we will share some of the stories which emerge from our reflections, and take turns playing these stories back in the simple ritual forms of Playback Theatre.

Poverty and HIV/AIDS in Africa

Poverty is real in the households of grandmothers who have traditionally used their income to educate their children with the expectation that their children will support them in their old age. Sadly, many of these children have died of AIDS and grandmothers must relive the parenting role with their grandchildren and struggle on less than a dollar a day. This workshop will explore the impact of poverty on grandmothers coping with HIV and AIDS and will propose a number of ideas to improve their livelihoods.

Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT)

This workshop focuses on how to prevent transmission from an HIV-positive mother to a child. It looks at modes of transmission, what you need to do if you suspect you are infected, and who is eligible to participate in the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission program. The session will review some of the major impacts and challenges, particularly in rural areas where there is little to no understanding about the disease.

Putting a Human Face on Publicity

This workshop will focus on the importance of publicity and awareness in helping grandmothers in the fight against AIDS. The session will look at lessons learned in using publicity, communication, and networking to form the G4G group, raise awareness in the community and fundraise to help grandmothers in Africa. Participants will share fundraising and publicity ideas that have been successful in raising awareness and money.

Resource Mobilization Skills in Support of Grandmothers' New Roles in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS

This workshop will give grandmothers an opportunity to talk about the financial and social needs they have in their expanded role as the caregivers of orphans. How can their experiences be used to create stronger and broader networks of support? How can they be used to sustain a mutually beneficial relationship between grandmothers and their grandchildren in a social context that has been eroded by the negative impacts of HIV/AIDS? Participants will also discuss how to identify funding

opportunities and develop project proposals.

Sharing the Experiences of Raising Good Children

In this workshop, three leaders will share their experiences in raising their grandchildren, the struggles they have faced, and how they have dealt with, overcome or continue to struggle with particular challenges.

Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children

This workshop involves a short talk about the presenter's work with orphans and vulnerable children, and a brief video of her work with street children, displaced people and those affected and infected with HIV/AIDS. She will also discuss her experiences mobilizing grandmothers, grandfathers and other caretakers to care for orphans.

Supporting Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (OVC) to Cope with Depression, Frustration, Stress and Building Self-reliance and Support

This workshop examines the ability of children to cope with trauma and the role of the caregiver (grandmother) to support that recovery process. During the workshop, participants will learn about resiliency development in children devastated by HIV/AIDS, the experiences of grandmothers who have actively witnessed the process, and how they supported the healing process.

Talking About Solidarity

As the first workshop that everyone attends, grandmothers will prepare to discuss solidarity in the context of their own experiences, within countries, and across borders. It is the only workshop in which participants have the opportunity to network within their regions. In order to facilitate this, there are four workshops for African participants, and six workshops for Canadian participants. Everyone will be encouraged to participate in open, two-way communication and mutual respect for differences throughout the Gathering. Participants will also discuss expectations, and explore what solidarity means in a North-South context — including building capacities, exchanging critical information, and building political and support alliances and networks during the Gathering and beyond. Please refer to the back of your nametag to identify which room you will be attending.

The Bambanani Programme for Children Infected with HIV and their Caregivers

This interactive workshop introduces the Bambanani Programme developed and conducted at Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre, South Africa, through a combination of presentations, illustrations, testimonies and role playing. The Bambanani Programme serves both HIV-positive children and their caregivers (often, but not always, grannies). It focuses on issues around diagnosis, disclosure, living with HIV, grief, and caring.

The Behaviour Change Process

This workshop will help grannies understand what behaviour is, what

influences behaviour, why some people find it difficult to change their behaviour and possible ways of helping oneself as well as others in the process of changing their behaviour. The workshop will include exercises and role playing.

The Forgotten Voices of Africa

This workshop will explore the real profile of grandmothers taking care of grandchildren or dependents in Africa: they are not only elderly women but also middle-aged women who have grandchildren before the age of 40. The workshop will have a brief presentation, a testimonial, and finally an open discussion where participants from either Africa or Canada are welcome to share their experiences and stories.

The Great Granny Revolution: The Rough Cut

The Great Granny Revolution is a documentary that follows a group of women in Wakefield, Quebec as they respond to the AIDS pandemic in a personal and inspiring way. Partnering with South African women at the East Bank Clinic, the Wakefield Grannies provide financial and emotional support for grandmothers raising AIDS orphans. The filmmakers will be available after the film to answer any questions from the audience. For additional information refer to their website www.rooneyproductions.com

The Journey of My Life

Participants will reflect on the 'ups and downs' they have experienced in their lives and how HIV/AIDS has impacted the growth and development of their families. They will have the opportunity to share information about the major

challenges they have faced as grannies, their coping mechanisms and the way forward. Each participant will use colours, crayons, pencil and paper to draw the journey of her life and will share their stories and pictures in pairs or small groups.

The Role of Global Economics in the AIDS Crisis

This workshop explores the relationship between the global economy and the spread of HIV/AIDS, in particular the impact of structural adjustment programs of the World Bank, the IMF and the trade bodies. The session will examine poverty as an ongoing problem that has not been adequately recognized and addressed in the context of HIV/AIDS.

Traditional Songs

The objective of this workshop is to share the experiences of traditional songs, and to develop ways of preserving them. After a brief introduction, the participants will sing a song based on traditional folklore, interpret its meaning and explore its function. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss traditional songs from their own communities, the impact these songs have on society, and the need to preserve them.

Understanding and Challenging HIV Stigma and Discrimination

This workshop will feature participatory exercises to deepen understanding about the stigma of HIV, help participants look inside themselves at their own attitudes, feelings and behaviour, build ownership of the problem, and develop practical strategies for challenging stigma.

The workshop will use action songs, picture discussion, reflection, and other exercises. The workshop will include exercises from the toolkit (Understanding and Challenging HIV Stigma: Toolkit for Action) developed by AIDS activists in Africa.

Why have Grandmothers Been Kept Voiceless?

This workshop will address the issue of why grandmothers have been kept voiceless, powerless, and vulnerable within the context of HIV/AIDS in Africa, and what is being done about it.

We' koqma'q Qewiskwa'q Drum Group

This workshop involves a performance by the We'koqma'q Qewiskwa'q ("way - go-mah oo-wees-kwa") Drum Group, made up of six women, several of whom are grandmothers actively involved in raising their grandchildren. The workshop will begin with the group smudging themselves and their drums, as both a cleansing and an acknowledgment of the Creator whose Spirit infuses the songs and the Drums. Woven in between the songs will be the translations and explanations of the teachings the songs contain. The session will include some instruction on how to drum and sing.

Where To From Here?

How will we take advantage of all the wonderful energy, excitement and commitment that the Granny Gathering has inspired? This workshop is designed to help us come up with some plans for what can be done after the event is over. African and Canadian grannies will develop a vision for where we want to go and then come up with some concrete priorities and ideas for making our vision a reality. The workshop will be interactive and use a creative drawing technique to develop our vision. In order to make this workshop most effective, it is hoped that a mixture of African and Canadian grannies will attend.