



Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign

How do I get involved?

- Learn more — read about the challenges African grandmothers are facing.
- Join an existing grandmothers' group or start your own. Contact campaign@stephenlewisfoundation.org or call 416-533-9292 ext. 234.
- Hold a screening of the SLF's film, 'Grandmothers: The unsung heroes of Africa.'
- Hold an event in your community in support of the Grandmothers Campaign.
- Join the grandmothers' list serv in order to share ideas and learn what others are doing.
- Sign up to receive bulletins on SLF projects in Africa.
- Make a donation to the campaign by cheque, money order, credit card or pre-authorized bank payments.
- Canadians can donate online at www.canadahelps.org/.
- US donations can be made through TIDES US at www.groundspring.org/.

GRANDMOTHERS: THE UNSUNG HEROES OF AFRICA

Africa has become a continent of orphans — an estimated 13 million children have been orphaned by AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa and the numbers are expected to reach 20 million in the next four years. In the midst of this devastation, grandmothers have emerged as the 'unsung heroes' of Africa. They bury their own children and then in their 50s, 60s and 70s begin to parent again, raising their grandchildren with little to no support. In some countries, 40-60% of orphans live in grandmother-headed households. These courageous and resilient women have no time to grieve. Their priority is the next generation: the infants, toddlers, and teenagers who are left behind. Although there is never enough for their burgeoning households, somehow these grandmothers attempt to feed, clothe and comfort their grandchildren.

LAUNCHING THE CAMPAIGN

Toward the end of 2005, Stephen Lewis and his daughter Ilana Landsberg-Lewis began discussions about how to support grandmothers in Africa. During his travels in Africa, Stephen heard first-hand from grandmothers about the challenges they face in raising their orphaned grandchildren. At the same time, Ilana was reading countless proposals and recognized that grandmothers were increasingly fundamental to programmes working on AIDS at the grassroots. While SLF was already supporting women, orphans and organizations of people living with HIV and AIDS, it became clear that a fourth area had to be added to the mandate: support for grandmothers.

In March 2006, on the eve of International Women's Day, the Foundation launched the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, which was designed to raise awareness in Canada about the plight of Africa's grandmothers and to mobilize support. At the time of the campaign launch, there were six groups of Canadian grandmothers who had chosen to fundraise and send proceeds to SLF to help support their peers in Africa. By the time of the August Grandmothers' Gathering, 50 Canadian grandmothers groups had formed. It can truly be said that the grandmothers have taken up the cause and have mobilized a movement that is over 140 groups strong!

SUPPORTING AFRICA'S GRANDMOTHERS

The Stephen Lewis Foundation funds grassroots organizations that assist grandmothers caring for AIDS orphans in 14 African countries. The Foundation provides grandmothers with much-needed assistance, including: food, school fees and school uniforms for their grandchildren, income-generating projects, counselling and social support, and coffins to allow for a dignified burial of their loved ones.