

THE RECONFIGURED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STEPHEN LEWIS FOUNDATION AND THE NATIONAL ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

FAQs

1. What this means at the “national level”

How does Stephen feel about all this?

Stephen has written a letter to the grandmother groups. You can obtain a copy on our respective websites or by contacting either the Foundation or advocacy network representatives directly.

Why did this happen? Why the separation?

This has happened as a natural outgrowth of the increased sophistication, complexity and capacity of the National Advocacy Committee of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, something we can all celebrate. NAC has evolved into a civil society organization with its own mandate to seek government action on access to medicines, the Global Fund and other issues.

The Foundation’s priority continues to be the critical support to African grandmothers and the children in their care in the context of AIDS – and in the current climate of significantly reduced funding to the continent for the work on AIDS. The SLF’s support for advocacy is through funding to African advocates (including grandmother advocates) and projects that are engaged in promoting the rights of people affected and infected by HIV and AIDS (such as TAC and PEFO) who advocate for pensions, benefits, women’s equality, education rights, property rights and access to treatment and medicines.

How closely will the grandmothers advocacy network work with the Foundation as they develop messages and materials?

The advocacy network has evolved significant expertise in developing timely, accurate and “granny-friendly” materials. As a separate civil society organization, the grandmothers advocacy network will conduct its own research, collaborate with other civil society organizations, participate in high-level discussions and develop their own materials, messages and campaigns.

Having said that, the grandmothers advocacy network has stated that it wishes to maintain a consultative relationship with the SLF in relation to messaging and other matters. This makes sense since our constituencies overlap and our mutual work is founded on listening to what the grandmothers of Africa need most at the moment.

Will advocacy updates still be part of the Granny Bulletin? Where else will we be able to find out about advocacy activities in future?

The Foundation will include updates about the work of the grandmothers advocacy network in the Granny Bulletin as it finds it appropriate. The network launched a new website this summer which anyone can consult at <http://grandmothersadvocacy.org>.

Beyond that, advocacy news and events, including the monthly newsletter called the Update, will continue to be shared from the national advocacy committee through regional Cluster

Leaders to local Advocacy Representatives and back again. These channels are well-established and effective and open to new additions at any time.

Will the Foundation and advocacy websites link to each other?

Yes. You will be able to find information on the Foundation site that briefly explains the role and purpose of the grandmothers advocacy network with a link to their new website. Similar linkages will be provided on the advocacy website to the Foundation's main website and SLF's Grandmothers Campaign website.

Does this mean we must now choose between fundraising and advocacy?

The Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign will continue to be a solidarity, fundraising and awareness raising campaign – to support community-based organizations in Africa supporting grandmothers and the grandchildren in their care.

The grandmothers advocacy network will continue to work on long-term solutions to support African grandmothers in the midst of the AIDS crisis through working for change to policies in Canada.

All grandmother groups will remain a solid and critical part of the SLF's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign – and of course there will be individuals and groups that remain deeply involved in the advocacy work which will now be done by the independent grandmothers advocacy network.

Groups and individuals will make their own decisions, and can certainly choose to do one or both.

When people ask us about advocacy, what should we say?

We can say that both organizations – the new independent grandmothers advocacy network and the SLF – are absolutely dedicated to working for and with the courageous and resilient grandmothers of sub-Saharan Africa. Under the grandmothers advocacy network umbrella, Canadian grandmothers urge Canadian MPs and Senators to support affordable generic drugs, an increased financial commitment to the Global Fund and other important issues that may arise. Under the Grandmothers Campaign umbrella, many of the same grandmothers raise awareness and absolutely essential life-enhancing and life-saving funds for the projects in Africa supporting grandmothers and the children in their care.

2. What this means at the “group level”

The success and strength of the Grandmothers Campaign is founded on the principle that each group knows best what to do and how to do it in their communities and this remains constant around group participation in advocacy and fundraising. Now, however, when grandmother groups want to engage, or continue to engage in advocacy work, they will be doing so with a separate organization – the grandmothers advocacy network – not under the auspices of the Grandmothers Campaign and the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

Will grandmothers be able to be a member of both the grandmothers advocacy network and the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign?

Any member of the Grandmothers Campaign can belong to her local group and the grandmothers advocacy network at the same time. Many groups have advocacy committees in place, or members who are very comfortable doing a range of activities that include advocacy, and there is no reason for this to change.

Can local grandmother groups display advocacy materials on their tables alongside SLF materials?

Local groups can decide what they want to do, but there's no reason why materials shouldn't be on the same display table.

Can grandmothers represent their group (wear their t-shirts and scarves) during demonstrations and rallies, or while they are contacting their MPs?

This is a decision best made by local groups. As a rule, however, grandmother advocates do not generally advertise the Campaign or the Foundation when meeting with Parliamentarians, since the Foundation is governed by the rules of the Canada Revenue Agency, which say that Foundations are not permitted to engage in political activity that targets the government, and limits what the government considers 'legitimate' advocacy to 10% of the charity's work. The grandmothers advocacy network will use its own new name and logo – not the SLF's Grandmothers Campaign logo.

Can Grandmother Groups raise money for the advocacy network?

The grandmothers advocacy network has determined to seek its own funding for things like conference calls and maybe even a part-time staff person. It is their stated intention not to compete with the Foundation for funds. Tens of thousands of African grandmothers and the grandchildren in their care rely upon the funds that the grandmothers' groups raise through the Campaign – the grandmothers advocacy network does not want to compromise direct and urgent funding to them by having grandmothers' groups within the Campaign raising money for Canadian advocacy.

What happens to the positioning of Stride? What happens to Kazuri Jewellery?

Both of these wonderful initiatives raise significant funds and awareness for the Grandmothers Campaign and are vehicles for advocacy as well. Grandmother groups across Canada have successfully incorporated fundraising and advocacy into many of their activities.

Can Advocacy Representatives and local advocacy committees still do workshops at local and regional grandmother gatherings?

If the local groups and gatherings want this to happen, then of course.

3. What this means at the grandmothers advocacy “network level”

The grandmothers advocacy network faces what may turn out to be a year of re-structuring, given that they do not want to sacrifice the work they have in motion. Members of the National Advocacy Committee (under its new name) will look at the options for incorporation and independent funding while continuing to champion legislation to allow the manufacture and sale of generic drugs from Canada to developing countries and all the rest.

Will the advocacy network's name and logo change to reflect this new direction?

Yes. The name and logo of what has been the National Advocacy Committee of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign will change to reflect that they are a separate entity,

a civil society organization no longer under the umbrella of the SLF's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign and with a different mandate. This will be a first matter of business for the advocacy network and will be reported as soon as that is possible.

How will communication happen between the two groups?

Janet Solberg will continue as the contact person at the SLF while Gillian Sandeman of the network's Leadership Team will continue as the contact person on the network side.