



RENEWAL: HOW GROUPS ARE EVOLVING.

Groups have shared a number of different ways in which they are re-imagining their structures and strategies after being part of the Campaign for over 10 years. Here is a compilation of ideas that have been tested and implemented.

Make the most of meetings. Some groups have adjusted their meeting times to accommodate members who might still be in the work force. Other groups have settled on having 2 meeting times – one at a time convenient for retired individuals, and another at a time convenient for non-retired individuals. This has increased meeting attendance.

Some meeting times have also been adjusted according to the season. For example, an earlier meeting time in the winter so that members don't have to drive in the dark, shorter meetings in the summer so that members can go about their day etc.

One group held a **special evening recruitment** event (a dessert party) and invited everyone on their email list to attend to learn more about the group and to see if it was a good fit for them.

Experiment with new fundraising activities. In an attempt to attract different age groups, some groups have tried new fundraising activities e.g. a wellness day that includes activities like yoga, meditation, music and dance etc.

Set manageable goals when it comes to recruitment. One group set itself the task of recruiting 4 members in 2 years and this helped alleviate some of the pressure around having new members join.

Groups have **re-examined leadership** and support structure to make sure members don't burn out. Examples include:

- **Creating a sub-group of grandmothers who are "on call"** to help out at events or with certain tasks, but who don't get all group emails or attend group meetings. For example: someone with a truck who can transport materials to events; a seamstress; high school students.
- One group has found that after 12 years, only a small percentage of the group was regularly attending meetings and taking on leadership roles, and so decided to **move from an "executive" or committee that makes decisions for the group to a model of collective decision making** that involves all members in the process. This has completely re-energized the group and increased engagement.
- **Break down leadership roles to share the work load.** For example, rather than a permanent secretary, ask for a volunteer at the start of each meeting to take notes. Rather than a formal fundraising committee, decide what needs to be done as you're planning each event, and take volunteers for those tasks. **Not having official roles and**



titles has felt less formal, and members feel less pressure and find it more appealing to volunteer, knowing they aren't committing to a year(s)-long responsibility. This has worked well for one group to encourage long-time members to step back and allow newer members to step forward, knowing that they can call on other members as a resource as needed.

Celebrate your successes and stay objective – recruiting even one or two members is a big deal and a great accomplishment! Change doesn't happen overnight but by having discussions and thinking about outreach strategies, your group is already taking steps to bring new members on board.

- **Social activities** outside of group meetings: Book clubs – whether the book list is related to the Grandmothers Campaign or not, book clubs have been a fun way for members to get to know one another.
- **Social events** – lunches or dinners just to get-together and try out new restaurants in the community or Outreach/Awareness activities that allow socializing, ex. Knit in Public Day.
- **Celebratory events**, like an end-of-year potluck, teas to honour and recognize founding (or older) members (and learn about the roots of the groups), spring picnic to honour your collaborative work and everything you've accomplished together.

Education components to meetings or education workshops in addition to meetings. This could be reading from Grassroots newsletters, the SLF Year in Review, Powered by Love etc. One group focuses on one African country per year and reads material, articles, etc. about this country throughout the year to deepen their understanding

- Show short videos created by the SLF/Grandmothers Campaign at group meetings to connect members to the "why" of the work (video resources available to groups are listed in the last section of this document)

Inventory members' skills and interests so that members can participate in activities they enjoy. Survey members to understand what sort of social activities they are interested in; one group created a connections committee for this purpose (to understand what members want, and implement activities in response)

Regional initiatives/collaborative events – working with other groups in the region is a chance to experiment with new events and initiatives and meet other members of the Campaign.

Collaborative decision-making processes so that members feel engaged, and have agency within the group rather than decisions being made by the leadership alone.

Acknowledge, affirm and appreciate hard work. Use website/Facebook pages to communicate group achievements and impact of the Grandmothers Campaign so that members (as well as



your group's supporters) connect your group's activities to the collective work of the Grandmothers Campaign.

Diversify group activities and fundraising events to engage more members (and potential members) who might not craft/sing/quilt/etc.

Hold events that are both socializers and fundraisers. Pub nights/Boston Pizza nights/etc. (where restaurants donate a percentage of profits from the evening to your group) are not as labour intensive and typically are attended by group members and their friends, so you have time to eat, chat and socialize while still raising funds.

- Have a **social activity** immediately after fundraising events – one group goes out for lunch/dinner following their fundraising events to unwind, debrief and have fun!

To read the full summaries from the campaign calls, go to <http://grandmotherscampaign.org/get-involved/campaign-conference-calls/>