



## Grandmothers Campaign Call Summary Notes – August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020

*The August Campaign Call continued the conversation about online sales, allowing groups to share how they've organized online sales, and for others to ask questions about the process. The Grandmothers Campaign team also shared an update about an online marketplace in development.*

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### Online Sales Show and Tell

We started the call by hearing from four different groups who have used websites, Facebook and email to facilitate online sales:

- **The Ujamaa Grandmas** in Calgary have an Etsy store called the Ujamaa Bagettes where they sell original patterns for bags of all kinds that have been developed by group members:  
<https://www.etsy.com/ca/shop/UJAMAABAGETTES>
  - When the Bagettes release new patterns, Ujamaa posts them on their own Facebook page as well as various bag-making Facebook groups.
  - They have partnered with a local bag hardware shop who has given them an account to buy hardware for their bags at wholesale prices. This retailer also includes Ujamaa's patterns in their newsletter which gets distributed to around 25,000 people.
  - Etsy notifies past customers and people who have "liked" the Ujamaa Bagettes store when a new pattern is added to the store, and they have found this prompts regular customers to purchase the pattern.
  - The beauty of this model is that there are no shipping costs, and no merchandise to store since the patterns are simply downloaded by customers after purchase.
  - Fees associated with Etsy are €27 per item (listing fee) which is charged every time an item is "re-listed" after being sold. There is also a transaction fee and a percentage of the sale is retained by Etsy. For an \$8.50 pattern, the group nets \$7.23 profit. The Bagettes also collect taxes on all purchases.
  - Another online sales events that the Bagettes held was a sealed auction of 10 wine totes made by members and inspired by a favourite artist or piece of art. They used the Ujamaa website and Google forms to collect bids on the bags.
  
- Grandmothers Partnering with Africa in Toronto have added "product sales" to the main menu of their website where they sell scarves: <https://grandmotherspartneringwithafrica.com/new-page-4> and cards (on behalf of another group in Toronto, the Old Orchard Blossoms) <https://grandmotherspartneringwithafrica.com/new-page-1>
  - The scarves are sourced through a wholesale seller that a member has connected with through her role as a volunteer buyer for a Toronto Hospital gift shop. The seller provides the group with photos of the scarves to post on their website and interested buyers email a group member to arrange purchase.
  - Scarves sell for \$20 and the group initially started small and local, delivering scarves to customers within the Toronto area and accepting payment by e-transfer to the group bank account, or by cheque or cash left in envelopes at time of drop-off. They are also able to accept payment by credit card through Square.



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- The group is now expanding beyond the Toronto area and will charge shipping costs in addition to the \$20 price. Because of this, it was important that the product they are selling is small and lightweight to minimize shipping costs.
- Scarves are stored at one member's house, and she keeps about 3-4 of each scarf on hand and reorders when enough scarves have sold.
- Another member takes care of keeping the website up to date – removing photos as stock is depleted or sold out.
- The group advertises the scarves through their mailing list (and use MailChimp to do so).
  
- The Greater Van Gogos (GVG) is the regional body that connects and facilitates collaboration between all of the groups within the Greater Vancouver region. The GVG website includes a marketplace where groups from the region can showcase products they have for sale: <https://greatervangogos.org/category/product/>
  - This marketplace is not a store and doesn't facilitate monetary transactions and purchase of items directly. Instead, interested customers can contact a general email address to inquire about products and get connected directly with grandmothers groups to learn more and arrange to purchase an item.
  - The marketplace is updated annually and some challenges include keeping information about items up to date, and not being able to have newer postings show up at the top of the page/list.
  
- Nelson Grans to Grans in Nelson, BC are using their group's Facebook page to highlight items they have for sale: <https://www.facebook.com/nelsongrans.tograns>
  - They started featuring products such as beeswax reusable food wraps and neck coolers around Mother's Day and got a great response from their followers.
  - The Facebook posts include a link to the Nelson Grans to Grans website where customers learn more information and then email the group to arrange purchase and pick-up of product. <http://nelsongrans2grans.weebly.com/neck-cooler-sale.html>
  - Products are stored and sold out of a member's house and are left in a mailbox for curbside pick-up. Customers leave cash or cheques in the mailbox at the time of purchase.
  - All sales are currently local, although the group has sent cards to other areas of BC.
  - The Nelson Grans haven't used Facebook ads to promote their products, but do post in the "What's On Weekly" section of their local paper and hope to leverage their email list in the future to promote these sales.

### **Grandmothers Campaign Marketplace**

For the past several months, the Grandmothers Campaign Team has been working on redesigning the Grandmothers Campaign website. This is happening in conjunction with a redesign of the Stephen Lewis Foundation's website, and we are beyond excited for both of these to launch!

As part of the Grandmothers Campaign redesign, we'll be creating a refreshed and more user friendly marketplace where each grandmothers group can post some general information about the products they have for sale as well as some photos.



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The marketplace will not facilitate transactions/purchases of items directly, but rather it will let visitors to the website learn about the merchandise groups have for sale, and will give them the information they need to get in touch with the group directly to learn more and purchase items.

We're looking forward to all the connections that may come from the marketplace, and the target launch date is late September or early October.

### Additional Ideas, Questions, Discussion about Online Sales

- Omas Siskona in Kitchener-Waterloo, ON are re-thinking their annual Scrabble event and marketplace to go virtual this year. They plan to use their website to have a 10-day sale where individuals will submit photos of products and information about how to purchase. They will have a group of volunteers who will pick up and deliver merchandise locally. Items for sale include member-made items, preserves, quilts, sewing items, tote bags, pottery donated by a local guild, gift baskets of items donated by local stores, jewellery and cards.
- The GANG in Edmonton, AB is launching an online store through their website using Woo Commerce. This capability was initially built into their website by a volunteer who is now helping them experiment with this e-commerce feature. A member has offered a spare room in her house as a distribution centre for merchandise.
- Kingston Grandmother Connection is gearing up to open an e-commerce site by mid-September, using a 90-day free trial from Shopify to assess if the platform is right for their group. They will have local pick-up only (no shipping), one day a week. They will be selling art, fibre art, sewn items, jewellery, preserves, wooden crafts, and items imported from Africa. Group members have been busy photographing items and writing descriptions.
- Blooms for Africa in Hamilton, ON received a large donation of fabric that they have used to make masks which they sell for \$10. The masks have sold very well and they now make children's masks as well.
- A question came up about packaging materials for items that are shipped, with the recommendation not to use plastic both for safety reasons and environmental considerations.

**Keep us in the loop!** We will continue to promote your events and activities on the Grandmothers Campaign Facebook page. Please send information about any fundraising events your group is planning to your Grandmothers Campaign Officer, or email [campaign@stephenlewisfoundation.org](mailto:campaign@stephenlewisfoundation.org).

**Thank you for a great call!**

Join us for the **September Campaign Call on Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 PM Eastern Time** to talk about plans for the fall and share ideas.

Contact the Grandmothers Campaign team at [campaign@stephenlewisfoundation.org](mailto:campaign@stephenlewisfoundation.org) for Zoom details, or sign up on the Grandmothers Campaign website:

<http://grandmotherscampaign.org/get-involved/campaign-conference-calls/>