TEA for CHANGE

TOOLKIT

Welcome!

Around the world, more than 800 million grandmothers hold deep life experience, practical skills, and the earned trust of their communities. In every village and town, they are already leading — raising children, settling disputes, running savings groups and passing on what they know.

Tea for Change is a simple way to bring that experience together for the good of your community. Inside you will find stories of grandmothers making a difference across Africa and the world, and a simple plan to host your own gathering.

If you have questions, or would like to tell us about your gathering, please email info@grandmothercollective.org. We would love to hear what you and the grandmothers in your community are doing. Together, let's build a better future for our families.

Warmly,
Grandmother Collective Team

TEA for CHANGE TOOLKIT

VISION & OVERVIEW

Around the world, women have always come together to care for their communities. They talk it through and take care of it together, looking after families, neighbors and the next generation. Sharing a drink creates a welcoming space to slow down, talk, and plan.

Together, elder women hold a deep store of experience, practical knowledge and leadership that can help families and communities thrive. By gathering, we share our stories, recognize our strengths, and find local solutions for a better future, for our grandchildren and the young people around us.

5-STEP TOOLKIT OVERVIEW

1. **Gather:** Invite women to share a drink and talk about the strengths grandmothers bring and the good they already do.
2. **Reflect:** Discuss the roles of elder women in your family and community.
3. **Define:** Name the challenges your community faces and picture a better future.
4. **Map:** List the skills, people and resources you already have.
5. **Act:** Make a simple plan and connect with others doing the same work.

Did You Know?

Kenya: Women's groups in the Green Belt Movement have planted tens of millions of trees to restore land and water.

Zimbabwe: Grandmothers are trained as mental health counselors to serve rural areas.

West Africa: Women have long pooled money in rotating savings groups, called susu in Ghana and tontines in Senegal.

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STEP 1



GATHER

Preparation & Guest List

- *Group Size:* 6–10 women, including at younger women who value the role of women in the community.
- *Place and Time:* Daylight, in a community space, or outside such as under a tree.
- *Invitations:* Adapt the invitation provided or invite guests by word of mouth.
- *Share:* If it is relevant, talk to local leaders first — the chief, women's leader, imam or pastor. Explain the positive community purpose and invite them to open or close the gathering. Let families know the meeting plans too.

Tea Time Activity

CUSTOMS WE VALUE

Grandmothers often carry their community's customs and stories — naming ceremonies, weddings, harvest festivals, songs, recipes and family histories.

Each Person: Introduce yourself and share one joyful custom, song or family practice that matters to you, and why.

Group: What do these customs have in common? What do they teach young people? Which ones help our community today?

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STEP 2



REFLECT

Read Together: The Strengths of Grandmothers

Across cultures, elder women share common strengths: experience, good judgment, trust, and a commitment to the next generation. These strengths are earned over a lifetime. Used together, they are a strong positive influence for families and communities.

Share or read aloud the Grandmother Strengths handout (Appendix).

Tea Time Activity

GROUP REFLECTION

What roles have grandmothers and elder women played in your family or community?

How do you share your experience and influence today?

Where are our experiences the same, and where are they different?

What did the elders you grew up with do well? How have those roles changed?

How do grandmothers support young people today? How could we do more together?

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STEP 3



DEFINE

Imagine the change you want to see and how to make it happen.

Tea Time Activity

1. PICTURING A BETTER FUTURE

As a whole group, talk about the future you want for your grandchildren. What needs to change in our village, town or country? Encourage people to tell a story. Paint a shared picture of a better future. Some groups like to draw it together.

2. PLANNING AROUND AN ISSUE

Pair up with someone who cares about the same issue — for example, girls staying in school, jobs and skills for young people, health, clean water, savings and income, or peace in the community.

1. Why does this issue matter to you?
2. What gets in the way, and what do we need to know to move forward?
3. How can we use our experience as elder women to start something?
4. Who can we work with — young people, leaders, existing groups?
5. What simple, joyful activity can we start together?

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STEP 4



MAP

Idea - Start from what we have

Every community has strengths: people, knowledge, skills, customs and groups. We start from these, not from what is missing.

Tea Time Activity

WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE

In pairs, list what you can use for your chosen issue:

What I bring: skills, experience, people I know

What our community has: savings groups, schools, clinics, churches and mosques, leaders, youth groups, markets.

GROUP REFLECTION

Share your lists with the whole group. Notice the strengths you hold as elder women. How does this change what you think you can do?

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STEP 5



ACT - CLOSING AND NEXT STEPS

Closing reflection — each person answers aloud:

- What can I do this week? How much time can I give?
- How much time can I give?
- What will bring me joy in this work?
- Who else should we invite to work with us — including young people, leaders and family?

Tea Time Activity

CLOSING CIRCLE

Each person shares one new idea she is taking home. Some groups close with a song.

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AFTER THE GATHERING

- Set a date to meet again and start on your plans.
- Thank the leaders who welcomed the gathering and share what the group discussed.
- Follow up with each participant by phone, message or a visit: thank her, recap the plans, and confirm the next meeting.
- Share useful contacts: local organizations, savings groups, clinics, paralegals.

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Appendix

Handout 1: Event Invitation Template

Handout 2: "Grandmother Strengths"

Handout 3: Grandmother Impact Examples

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TEA *for* CHANGE

You're Invited!

Hosted By: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Join us for **Tea for Change**, a friendly gathering inspired by the experience of grandmothers and elder women. For generations, women have come together to talk, share burdens, celebrate and be a positive influence.

Together we will talk about what matters most to our families, share our stories, and turn our strengths into ideas for action. Grandmothers, elder women, and younger women who value women's leadership are all welcome.

This gathering is welcomed by: _____
(local leader or partner organization)

Learn more about how grandmothers are shaping our world for good at grandmothercollective.org

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"Grandmother Strengths"

At Grandmother Collective, "grandmother" is more than a family title. It describes a respected role found among elder women in nearly every culture. Some are grandmothers by birth; others are the aunties, elders and mentors every community depends on.

Qualities	Description
Experience + Good Judgement	Grandmothers have lived through many changes. They bring practical skills to everyday and difficult problems.
Care + Understanding	They understand people's needs and offer advice, comfort and mentoring to families and neighbors.
Trust + Guidance	They can build bridges between generations and work alongside families, young people and community leaders
Resilience	They adapt to change and keep going, sharing lessons with those around them.
Thinking of the Future	They act for the generations to come — they mentor, speak up, organize, learn and teach.
Carrying Culture	They pass on family stories, songs, recipes and values, giving young people a sense of belonging.
Problem Solving	They see how people and situations connect, and find practical ways forward.

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GRANDMOTHER IMPACT EXAMPLES

In Africa

- **Grandmother Project — Change through Culture (Senegal):** Brings grandmothers, girls, parents and leaders into dialogue so communities themselves choose to keep girls in school and delay marriage.
- **Friendship Bench (Harare, Zimbabwe):** Trains grandmothers to offer problem-solving talk therapy on wooden benches in public places.
- **Older people's paralegals (Mwanza and Kagera, Tanzania):** HelpAge trained older people as paralegals to help neighbors know their rights and get legal advice **(HelpAge)**.
- **Grandmother groups across sub-Saharan Africa:** Grandmothers raising children orphaned by AIDS organize support groups, savings and care, backed by the **Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign** .
- **The Leo Project (Laikipia, Kenya)**: Trains traditional birth companions to spot danger signs and get mothers to clinics safely.
- **Hibiscus Dotage Foundation, (Harare, Zimbabwe):** A youth-led movement restoring intergenerational dignity across Zimbabwe — one elder, one child, one volunteer at a time.

Around the World

- **We Love Reading (Amman, Jordan):** Trains local elders and adults to hold read-aloud sessions, building children's love of reading, traditional languages, and cultural understanding.
- **Grandparent Circle, JPA (Chicago, USA):** Pairs elder mentors with middle school girls for activities and listening.
- **Grandmas2Go (Medford, Oregon, USA):** Matches elder women as volunteer mentors for new parents.