



## AGENCY PROFILE 2009

### ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Name: Help the Aged Canada /  
Aide Aux Aînés Canada

Charitable Registration Number: 118955921 RR0001

Incorporation Number: 173327 - 3

Address: 1300 Carling Ave. Unit 205  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1Z 7L2

Telephone: (613) 232-0727 or 1-800-648-1111  
Fax Number: (613) 232-7625  
E-mail address: info@helptheaged.ca  
adoptagran@helptheaged.ca

*Web site:* [www.helptheaged.ca](http://www.helptheaged.ca)

Member: HelpAge International  
AQOCI: Association québécoise des  
organismes de coopération internationale

**Patron: Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, C.C, C.O.M., C.D.,  
Governor General of Canada**

### MISSION STATEMENT

Help the Aged Canada (HTAC) was created in 1975 by a group of Canadian volunteers who were concerned that no registered charitable organization in Canada had been established to represent the interests and needs of poor and destitute elderly people in developing countries and in Canada. Our mission has been to improve the quality of life of the elderly poor, support their independence and inclusion, and provide services and programs to relieve distress, poverty and sickness. We partner with national and international organizations to support, facilitate and encourage effective and sustainable community programs and services that help the elderly to

meet their basic needs, improve their quality of life, and increase their capacity to contribute to their communities. We are the only registered charity in Canada with the exclusive mission of assisting destitute elderly people on an international basis. Our organization was modeled on an affiliate agency Help the Aged (UK) (now called Age Concern) which was created in 1961. HTAC is a volunteer based organization with essential support provided to our staff in the areas of office administration, program management and field work. Five full-time staff in Ottawa is assisted by more than 100 Canadian volunteers and many local volunteers overseas.

## **AFFILIATIONS**

We are an affiliate member of HelpAge International, a global network of 70 non-profit organizations sharing similar goals and objectives. We are also members of AQOCI, (Association Québécoise des Organismes de Coopération Internationale) a Quebec based umbrella group of 53 international development organizations.

In addition to donors and sponsors, HTAC receives ongoing financial support for all overseas development projects through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the Quebec Ministry of International Relations.

As part of the government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy, we are funded by CIDA through their International Youth Internship Program. We are able to assign groups of young Canadian professionals to various overseas projects for seven-month assignments. We are also supported by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) under their National Career Focus program which provides new graduates to local charitable organizations working with seniors across Canada.

Collaboration with other NGOs is implemented through the affiliations listed above and through various joint projects. Currently, all of our Canadian and overseas programs are co-ordinated through local charitable organizations such as the Salvation Army, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Red Cross Society and the Oblate Missionaries.

## **SUMMARY OF CANADIAN CONSTITUENCY**

As stipulated in our bylaws, membership includes the following:

- Board of Directors, past and present members
- Members of other committees established by the Board
- Honorary patrons (i.e. Hon. Flora MacDonald, Margaret Atwood, David Suzuki, etc.)
- "Other persons as the Board shall from time to time determine" (i.e. other volunteers who are closely involved with our work)

Our Board of Directors, committees, staff and office volunteers have proven to be remarkably loyal and stable. Many of the Board members have at least five years of experience with HTAC.

## **DONORS**

We have 5,500 regular donors and sponsors who support our development projects overseas, our Adopt-A-Gran sponsorship program and our Canadian programs. Our donor base is national with a higher percentage of Ontario residents. Approximately 350 private companies and/or corporations, service clubs, churches and foundations donate to Help the Aged. Donors are kept informed through an annual report and five brochures, which are mailed out every two months. Our average donation is \$45.

As reflected in the bylaws, we are non-denominational and not affiliated with any political organization. A copy of our bylaws is available upon request.

## **CANADIAN STAFF, BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **1. Executive Director:** Jacques Bertrand, appointed December 14, 2009

The Executive Director manages office staff and obtains approval from the Board of Directors for major initiatives. The Executive Director is hired by the Board of Directors and reports at Board meetings held 3-4 times a year and at other Committee meetings held on a regular basis.

Policies and procedures are recommended by the Executive Committee and approved by the Board are implemented by the Executive Director following discussions with staff and volunteers.

Positions are advertised and interviews conducted by staff and some of the Board members. Staff salaries are recommended by the Executive Director to the Executive Committee and presented to the Board of Directors for final approval at the annual meeting in June.

### **2. Other Staff**

Help the Aged employs a program officer, a co-ordinator for the Adopt-A-Gran program, a bookkeeper, and an administrative assistant. One part-time staff person provides additional support to the Adopt-A-Gran co-ordinator and the bookkeeper.

### **3. Board of Directors:**

Board members are elected at the annual meeting of members for a one-year term. A nominating committee is appointed to review and recommend potential candidates at the following year's annual meeting. Members of the Board are elected as members of the various Committees to maintain continuity.

Chairman of the Board is Jacqueline Bannister of Ottawa. The Vice-Chair is Pierrette Leonard.

Our Board is accountable to the members at the annual meeting and the Executive Director is a non-voting member of the Board. The Board is also accountable to CIDA, HRSDC, Revenue Canada and Consumer and Corporate Affairs to ensure that all legal requirements are observed. HTAC is registered with the Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Corporate Relations and publishes audited financial statements annually, which are publicly available. All cheques are co-signed. Duties of Board members are detailed in our bylaws.

Implementation is normally a result of staff and volunteer interaction and decisions are finalized at the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors level. An operating budget and work plans for the following year are approved at the annual meeting of the Board.

4. **Executive Committee:** This Committee normally meets every month and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors on various issues. The Committee reviews reports and recommendations prior to presentation to the Board. Through the Executive Director, the Committee monitors the operations of all HTAC functions and reports to the Board.

## **INCORPORATION, REGISTRATION, AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Help the Aged was registered as a charitable organisation with Revenue Canada in 1975 (#11895921 RR0001) and incorporated in 1984 (#173327-3). A copy of our incorporation certificate is available. We receive the standard GST rebate on all expenditures in Canada. A copy of our bylaws is also available.

A monthly financial report is verified by our Treasurer who is a Certified General Accountant and our books are audited in April. The audited statement is printed in our annual report in October and is included on our web site. Overseas accounts are verified during our annual visits through discussions with our local partners and meetings with the local auditor. An annual audit is requested for all large projects. These reports are verified and filed by the Executive Director. Cash flow schedules are controlled by the Executive Director following the approval of project payment dates by the granting organizations.

The main fundraising strategies are direct mail to donors, government grant applications, corporate fundraising, public service announcements, and telemarketing to donors who have discontinued support for more than 12 months.

Our financial year is April 1 to March 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **CURRENT INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS**

1. **Haiti:** A three-year CIDA project to assist 10 of Haiti's poorest communities was introduced by HTAC to install 10 water reservoirs and two wells, repair and renovate existing long-term care facilities for destitute seniors in six communities (latrines, kitchens, showers, mosquito screening) and hire local nurses and physiotherapy technicians to treat the elderly poor in all 10 communities. In Dessalines, we work with the Free Methodist Church to complete cataract surgeries and introduce a dental care program for seniors living in poverty. Income generating activities such as fruit tree planting, agriculture and animal husbandry are organized so that these programs become sustainable. All of this is coordinated and monitored by our Canadian volunteers, most of whom travel to Haiti in order to assist us with previous projects.

2. **Equateur Region, Congo:** HTAC has provided primary health care and agricultural projects in the Congo since 1996. This country has been in a state of crisis since its independence in 1960, with the most recent civil war claiming four million lives, the most of any war since the Second World War. Because of the great suffering in this country, we are continuing to provide support through two projects approved by CIDA. One of the projects is in the province of Equateur where we have been working since 1996. We are focusing on improvements to three hospitals (Karawa, Loko and Bokada) serving a population of 400,000. We are also involved in community health programs including the training of 38 regional health leaders.

3. **West Kasai Region, Congo:** To combat malnutrition and starvation, which is prevalent in this area, this two-year project focuses on agricultural production with 30,000 farmers receiving our direct support through approximately 1,000 local farming associations. Over a two-year period we plan to produce 290 tons of beans, 120 tons of peanuts, 20 tons of soy, 20 tons of corn and two million cassava plants. In addition, a total of 110,000 trees including fruit trees will be planted. We have added a primary health care component, which will include 5,000 annual patient consultations per year.

4. **India Eyecare Program:** This project has been completed, but over the past 15-year period, more than 51,000 cataract surgeries have been completed in India with the support of Help the Aged Canada.

#### **4. Youth Internship Programs and Laval University Program:**

During the last eight years, Help the Aged has assigned 50 young people for seven-month periods to assist caring organizations that we support in developing countries. We also send medical students to assist our overseas projects through an agreement with Laval University

### **ADOPT -A- GRAN SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM**

The Adopt-a-Gran sponsorship program matches a sponsor with a destitute elderly person in a developing country. Presently, over 1100 grans are sponsored by 900 sponsors. Grans are provided with food, clothing, medical care and shelter with each sponsor's support, either directly to the gran or to grans in community-based dwellings. (Please note that federal and provincial governments do not provide matching funds for sponsorships programs.)

## **CURRENT NATIONAL PROJECTS**

**1. National Career Focus program:** A grant from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada enabled us to hire 120 young people over the past five years throughout the country to work directly with local charitable organizations. All of these organizations work with frail and isolated elderly people who greatly benefit from the additional staff support provided by Help the Aged and HRSDC. HRSDC pays 100% of salary and benefit costs for the participants.

**2. Abraham's Lodge and Care Society, Williams Lake, B.C.:** The Lodge's shelter for the homeless and their outreach program provide food, clothing and furniture for the poor living on 15 reserves around Williams Lake.

**3. Operation Friendship, Edmonton:** Homeless seniors whose basic needs are met by caring volunteers and staff at this inner city shelter.

**4. The Mission, Capital City Mission (Ottawa):** HTAC is providing support to homeless elderly people through these two local charitable organizations.

**5. Glace Bay Food Bank, N.S.:** Seniors living in poverty receive nutritious meals purchased with donations by Glace Bay volunteers at the Food Bank.

**6. Le P.A.S. de la Rue, Montreal:** HTAC has provided financial support to *Les Petits Frères des Pauvres* in Montreal for five years. *Les Petits Frères* created the *P.A.S. de la Rue* to specifically assist Montreal area homeless seniors and elderly people in crisis. Donations are used for their basic needs.

**7. St. Christopher's Meals on Wheels Program (Toronto):** Due to budget restrictions, most meals on wheels programs must charge a fee for each meal delivered by volunteers. Many seniors living in poverty cannot afford to pay the \$4.25 fee on a daily basis. Starting with St. Christopher's, HTAC hopes to gradually support more and more Meals on Wheels programs throughout Canada.

**8.** HTAC is the lead agency in the **Reaching Out to Isolated Seniors** program in Ottawa, which provides a single phone number for concerned individuals to call to ensure that appropriate and timely services are provided for the senior. A network of community and health agencies and faith groups work together to address the needs of isolated seniors or seniors who are at risk of becoming isolated. Our web site, [www.isolatedseniors.ca](http://www.isolatedseniors.ca), provides additional detail.

**9. Elderly in Need:** Nationally, HTAC provides a one-time grant of up to \$1,000 for seniors living below the poverty line who are in critical need of vital equipment or services. Seniors are referred to HTAC by social workers and health professionals.

**10. Inuit Elderly:** HTAC has formed a Nunavut Advisory Committee that is currently working with us in Iqaluit to research, design, and implement programs and services that will address gaps in service for Inuit elderly. Funding opportunities are also being explored.

### **FUNDRAISING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS PROGRAMS**

In addition to project funding from CIDA, HTAC also receives project-related grants from the Quebec Ministry of International Relations for our overseas projects. Income from government agencies normally consists of about 50% of total revenues. Our Adopt-A-Gran program and some of our Canadian programs are not eligible for government funding.

We attempt to combine development education with fundraising and public awareness programs. This process is also followed in our correspondence with the general public and through newspaper, radio and television interviews and informational kiosks. We have kiosks in malls, at festivals, fairs and government offices to raise awareness as well as to recruit volunteers. In Ottawa, we are the only agency that raises awareness about isolated seniors through the unique strategy of going to the “ears and eyes” of the community, local businesses such as the neighbourhood grocery, bank, pharmacy, hairdresser, coffee shop, etc to raise awareness about the risk factors of isolation and where to call for help.

A Marketing and Publicity Committee has also been formed and consists of one staff person and volunteers. The committee founded an electronic newsletter that was launched April, 2006. The committee has also participated in the Hope Volleyball event in Ottawa and has written grant applications for other charity events. A Kenya gift catalogue was developed as an Adopt-A-Gran promotional and fundraising tool. Gifts such as livestock, mosquito nets and homes were purchased for adopted grans and for the elderly poor who were not yet sponsored. The catalogue has provided us with an opportunity to recruit new donors as well as new sponsors. It has also provided an outlet for existing donors to donate to an elderly person in Kenya even though their gran may live in another country. We also provide development education through Power point presentations to churches and service clubs. Due to travel and accommodation expenses as well as minimal Canadian staff resources, we rarely involve our overseas partners in development education in Canada other than requesting articles for our annual newspaper and brochures.

### **PROJECT PLANNING PROCESS**

The planning process at HTAC begins with approval by our Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the work plans and operating budget for the upcoming year, including a review of all project disbursement schedules planned for that year.

Overseas projects are normally proposed by local NGOs who are familiar with our agency's mandate either through our Adopt-A-Gran program, HelpAge International, or through networking with other NGOs and/or church organizations. The reputation and level of experience of the local NGO is verified and the feasibility of the proposed project is evaluated using a matrix system which outlines and measures various criteria. Once the project has been approved, a field visit is then planned. Gender equity and environmental improvements are important considerations in project review. The community and the elderly must indicate their strong support for each project before it can be seriously considered and the Executive Director or program officer must be satisfied that a consultation process with the elderly has taken place before submitting a specific project. Management of each project involving the elderly is strongly encouraged. An environmental screening and assessment study showing no adverse environmental impacts is carried out.

Projects are planned, managed and evaluated using the Results Based Management methodology required by CIDA. Improved planning, based on lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation visits, is facilitated by the small number of staff and volunteers who are currently involved in overseas visits and frequently interact to discuss project monitoring, trips, problem areas, possible improvements, etc.

Our expertise in development includes institutional support and capacity building for our southern partners, primary health care initiatives (medical support and training, potable water, HIV/AIDS, eye care, food aid, health services), and income generation (agro-forestry, animal husbandry). HTAC brings the following "value added benefits" to its partners:

- An awareness of the issues and assistance in addressing the needs of the elderly.
- An awareness and assistance in addressing gender equality.
- An awareness and assistance in identifying environmental issues.
- Capacity building assistance in project design, management and reporting.
- Assistance in developing analytical tools to better identify specific needs, trends and responses.
- Assistance in developing networking with other NGOs doing similar or complementary work.
- Assistance in providing access to information and to international and Canadian professionals.
- Assistance by providing volunteers and youth interns to the partner.
- Sourcing and shipping of donated and purchased supplies and equipment.
- Project funding.

Professional expertise is available through our membership affiliations. Helpage International, for example, has representatives in the Caribbean, Asia and Africa who correspond with us and can assist us with project monitoring and evaluation, if so requested. Technical expertise is readily available from these sources and from CIDA.

Regular monitoring visits by either HTAC staff or volunteers supplements the reports provided on a regular basis by each local NGO. Future project disbursements are dependent on satisfactory results and the assurance that financial reports are both accurate and verifiable. We have developed a *Project Evaluation Guide*. The purpose of this document is to develop a framework which is useful to our agency's project evaluation staff and volunteers in conducting project evaluations to monitor our ongoing project work. Among other things, the project evaluation will look at the specific measures that have been taken to improve the conditions or long-term opportunities of women, including the long-term commitment of the local partner and the community to the goal of providing opportunities for women. It will also look at the specific measures that have been taken to improve local environmental conditions through our rural agro-forestry and animal husbandry projects. Our successful project approaches such as primary health-care programming are replicated in other settings.

One key programming strategy that has not been described earlier in this profile is our confidence in local NGOs, which have a strong religious affiliation. Groups such as the Salvation Army, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Oblate Missionaries and other organizations closely linked to the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and other faiths have proven to be very trustworthy and reliable. The problem of potential corruption is one that must be seriously considered with each project as part of the planning process, particularly when such large financial transfers are involved. Identifying committed, capable and humanitarian individuals within such organizations has proven to be a reliable and successful method to achieve the goals and objectives of each project.

### **PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS**

We normally choose local partners who are registered non-profit groups with an affiliation to a larger, reputable organization (example, local chapter of the Salvation Army). We have found that projects organized through local groups working as members of a larger "parent" organization have a better success rate. The monitoring and assistance provided by the parent organization supplements the services that we provide and improves results. Each proposal received serves as a foundation for the project, which normally requires the addition of essential components such as training, institutional support, an evaluation process, etc. Following project approval, implementation is the responsibility of the local partner with assistance and advice provided by HTAC and the parent organization, if applicable. In terms of evaluation and communication, the projects are normally visited twice a year by a HTAC representative. The level of communication by fax, letter, Internet and telephone varies with the complexity of the project, and is usually more frequent early on in the project when the local NGO may not be familiar with all of the proper procedures. Copies of financial reports are also requested from the local partners. Local partners normally meet either monthly or every two months. Capacity building, training and institutional support are integral parts of each project proposal and involve local, national and international resources. As noted earlier, environmental protection is also an

area of high priority when planning and implementing projects.

In terms of formal agreements, we provide a copy of the approved project and budget and request that a separate bank account be opened for each project with two local signing officers for each bank transaction. We also request an annual audit for all large projects and a letter of commitment to meet the goals and objectives of the project within the approved budget.

In terms of our Adopt-A-Gran program which we introduced in 1978, we have been working with basically the same overseas organizations in eight countries. Most of the partners in this program are religious organizations whose mandate is to support the destitute. Most of our project applications for overseas activities are for three-year terms. This process has given us the opportunity to develop positive, long-term relationships with local partners leading to a higher success rate and improved chances of project sustainability.

Specific measures taken to improve the conditions or long-term opportunities of women in programs include a review of the local NGOs past achievements in this area, the participation of women in both the current management of the NGO and as beneficiaries in previous activities, and the long-term commitment of the group and the community to the goal of providing opportunities for women through the proposed program.

Developmental activities for the elderly, particularly in rural areas, offers opportunities through controlled agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing ponds, etc. to improve local environmental conditions. Environmental screenings are an integral part of each project. Evaluations are normally the responsibility of the Executive Director or the program officer and/or HTAC volunteers who have extensive developmental experience, and are prepared to travel overseas on our behalf. Evaluations also involve local NGO management and project beneficiaries in a team approach.

#### **DEVELOPMENTAL INFORMATION:**

1) **Development Sectors**

- Health (including provision of clean water)
- Community development

- Income generation
- Agricultural and agro-forestry
- Education and skills training
- Humanitarian aid
- Community development

b) **Developmental Objectives:**

1. Working as a team with our overseas partners, identify, monitor and evaluate sustainable development projects that assist the elderly poor.
2. Assist our overseas partners to increase their scope and efficiency through the implementation of specific projects, the provision of relevant training programs and the assignment of Canadian volunteers. Our long-range goal is to develop self-sufficiency with our local partners through projects, training and institutional support.
3. Propose long-term projects (3 years) that will give overseas partners a better opportunity to ensure successful program implementation. Assistance with program operating costs is planned to gradually provide the local NGO with greater financial responsibility and autonomy.
4. Encourage participation by the entire community in the planning and implementation of each project.
5. Ensure that the elderly are actively involved in the management of each project.
6. Ensure that environmental concerns and gender development issues are prioritised.
7. Emphasize income-generating activities in all projects to assure sustainability.
8. Provide educational programs for the elderly poor including workshops on health and nutrition.
9. Support projects which have clear and realistic objectives which are attainable within the limits of the time and resources available.
10. Ensure that there are well-identified inputs or resources required for the successful implementation of each project.
11. Ensure that those responsible for every project's management have the necessary qualifications, competence and experience to provide sound management.

Don/mydocs/Board/AgencyProfile2007 (revised 2009)