

Powered by Love: Book Club

Thank you for selecting *Powered by Love* for your next book club! To support this process, we are happy to provide some context on the making of the book, some optional exercises to begin your book club session, and some questions to consider while you are reading the book or to facilitate a meaningful conversation at your book club!

The Making of *Powered by Love*

The process of writing this book began long before a word was put on paper. The reason for that was a deep commitment to the necessity of giving voice to African and Canadian grandmothers to tell their own stories in their own words. Equally strong an imperative was the decision to avoid narrative that could be better expressed by the grandmothers.

Let's talk about what this book is not, for a moment . . . It is not one grandmother's story, it is not a series of profiles, nor is it a story about community-based organizations, and it is not a definitive text on the study of grandmothers in Africa or in Canada. This is the story of a movement on two continents and it is told by a collective. The purpose of this book is to give voice to thousands of grandmothers with whom the Stephen Lewis Foundation has worked over a decade, to share their experiences and expertise – to combat the AIDS pandemic both at the front lines and in a solidarity movement in Canada.

The Stephen Lewis Foundation is situated in this story in a very particular way, and we wrote this book with the



following in mind: on the one hand, the Stephen Lewis Foundation has worked closely with Canadian grandmothers to build a campaign that they, in turn, built into a social movement, and on the other hand, we have spent a decade working with African community-based organizations (CBOs) run by and for grandmothers. We strive, in this work, to recognize the disparity of power in our role as 'donor' and to take our lead from the African grandmothers and CBOs to ensure that, as much as possible, they are able to articulate their needs, their expertise, vision and perspective. We depended upon the relationships we have engaged in and developed over the past decade, to build an iterative process that would allow us to work with the grandmothers to tell a story that spans the realities and experiences of communities, countries and continents.

The integrity of the process of making this book has been paramount. Interviews were conducted with thousands of grandmothers over a year, in eight sub-Saharan African countries and across Canada. But the conversations with grandmothers, their support organizations and the grandmothers groups lasted another four years as we