Strategic Plan

2023-2028

The Centre for Human Rights Research [CHRR] is a research centre based on Treaty 1 territory on the University of Manitoba's Fort Garry campus in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The CHRR was established in 2012 with the aim of bringing together people and organizations – both within and outside the University – to enhance interdisciplinary and collaborative research capacity, create richer training opportunities for students, and facilitate the fusion of research-driven knowledge, public policy and intellectual debate on issues related to human rights and social justice. The Centre aims to facilitate research that is both academically rigorous and accessible to the public.

CHRR Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Context for the Strategic Plan

In its first decade, the CHRR has provided support to researchers working on human rights topics and hosted numerous public talks and events. As CHRR leadership evaluated their accomplishments and at the suggestion of the Senate Committee on University Research (SCUR), CHRR decided that strategic input from its Research Affiliates, staff, and students would be useful to guide next steps and provide direction to Centre's future work.

Engagement Process

CHRR Research Affiliates, staff, and students gathered at the University of Manitoba on March 10, 2023, for a half-day strategic planning workshop. There was a hybrid option for those who preferred to attend virtually, and the CHRR circulated a survey to gather input from those who could not attend.

The workshop was organized into two parts: the first focused on participants' overall vision for the CHRR and the second used a PARK (Preserve, Add, Remove, Keep Out) process to gather more specific input about what participants would like CHRR's work to look like moving forwards. Participants worked in small groups to generate ideas, which they wrote on post-it notes and then added to posters for each question.

After the workshop, the facilitation team organized the participants' ideas and worked with CHRR leadership to develop this strategic plan.

Contents of this Report

University of Manitoba | Centre for Human Rights Research

Vision and Guiding Principles

The Vision Statement for the CHRR was collaboratively drafted at the strategic planning workshop and later refined to reflect input from all participants. It encapsulates participants' idea of what the CHRR should be. The Guiding Principles are based on values that participants highlighted as important to the CHRR's work.

Vision Statement

The CHRR uses an intersectional lens to research and advocate for human rights and Indigenous sovereignty and resurgence. We work with researchers and communities inside and outside of the University of Manitoba to develop and foster a wide variety of research that is informed by social justice.

Guiding Principles

- Ensure that research and programs reflect an understanding of **intersectionality**.
- Continue and expand work on **Indigenous rights**.
- Consider **local and international** human rights issues.
- Ensure that research and programs **take a critical perspective** that does not reproduce the liberal rights order, reinforce social privileges, or use human rights as an unproblematized universal term.
- Prioritize **accessibility** of programs and research outputs.
- Support research that contributes to **social change**.
- Speak against misogyny, racism, and ableism and **advocate for inclusion**.
- **Keep CHRR processes simple** and accessible.

Goals and Objectives

Input from the strategic planning workshop was organized into themes, which were then summarized into four main goals. Each overall goal contains two to four specific objectives. The next section will outline actionable steps for each objective.

Goal 1: Enhance the CHRR's support for research and researchers

Objective 1.1: Bolster in-house research capacity

Objective 1.2: Offer resources to build researcher capacity

Objective 1.3: Facilitate networking and collaboration among those with similar interests

Objective 1.4: Support student engagement in human rights research

Goal 2: Grow the CHRR's network on- and off-campus

Objective 2.1: Expand the CHRR's network within UofM communities

Objective 2.2: Build relationships with off-campus organizations

Goal 3: Strengthen the CHRR's public presence

Objective 3.1: Prioritize accessibility for events and materials

Objective 3.2: Continue to host public events on human rights issues

Objective 3.3: Diversify CHRR materials available online

Goal 4: Build the CHRR's institutional capacity

Objective 4.1: Gain more support for CHRR activities from UofM administration

Objective 4.2: Access additional resources to support CHRR work

Actions

This section provides a roadmap for implementing this strategic plan. Each of the objectives has between one and four measurable actions that the CHRR can work on.

Actions for each objective are lettered starting with A) for ease of reference, i.e., the first action can be referred to as 1.1A.

The **timeline** for each action indicates whether it is already **ongoing** or could be undertaken in the **short-term** (within the year), **medium term** (within 3 years), or **long-term** (within 5 years).

The actions marked as **high priority** are central to CHRR's ongoing function.

The last column contains the **metric** for tracking progress or the **first steps** that will be needed. Metrics are shown in *italics* and first steps are shown in [underlined brackets].

The table below shows an example of how the objectives in this section are laid out.

Goal #: Name of Goal

Objective #.#: Name of Objective

Action	Timeline	Priority	*Metrics* or [First Steps]
A) Action	*Ongoing*	*High*	*Example metric*
B) Action	*Medium-term*	*Normal*	[Example first step]

Goal 1: Enhance the CHRR's support for research and researchers

Objective 1.1: Bolster in-house research capacity

Action	Timeline	Priority	*Metrics* or [First Steps]
A) Increase CHRR's ability to directly conduct research such as through grant-funded projects or hiring a visiting scholar or post-doc.	Medium-term	High	[Draft submission for internal and/or external funding competitions]

Objective 1.2: Offer resources to build researcher capacity

Action	Timeline	Priority	*Metrics* or [First Steps]
A) Continue the Small Grants program to support relevant research initiatives. Potential topics of interest include: ○ work with older adults, ○ children's rights, ○ MAID, ○ sports, ○ cultural memory and the arts, ○ anti-hate work, ○ human rights journalism, and ○ human rights law.	Ongoing	High	*Number of Small Grants awarded* *Total monetary value of Small Grants*
B) Continue Methods and Mediums skills-building workshops for students and researchers. Potential topics include: ○ An interdisciplinary forum on best practices for methodologies, ○ Grant application training, ○ A session on op-ed writing, and ○ Media training for researchers working on controversial topics.	Ongoing	High	*Number of workshops held* *Number of attendees (researchers)* *Number of attendees (students)*
C) Create a resource guide on Indigenous research methodologies and profile it on the website.	Short-term	Normal	[Student research assistant to conduct literature review on Indigenous research methodologies] [CHRR Research Affiliates to review resource guide once it is drafted]

Objective 1.3: Facilitate networking and collaboration among those with similar interests

Action	Timeline	Priority	*Metrics* or [First Steps]
A) Host networking events for CHRR Research Affiliates.	Ongoing	High	*Number of events* *Number of attendees*
B) Develop "interest clusters" that people with related projects can join.	Long-term	Normal	[Secure additional funding] [Communicate with CHRR Research Affiliates to determine potential topics for initial clusters]
C) Build a process for community organizations to suggest research topics & connect to researchers interested in collaborating with them.	Long-term	Normal	[Secure additional funding] [Create a web-based submission form for interested community organizations]

Objective 1.4: Support student engagement in human rights research

Action	Timeline	Priority	*Metrics* or [First Steps]
A) Provide paid employment opportunities for students to assist with CHRR research.	Ongoing	High	*Number of student positions offered*
B) Host workshops for students and/or include them in events for researchers where relevant.	Short-term	Normal	[Promote events through student organizations] [Target some social media promos to students] [Post a form on website where students and the general public can submit workshop ideas]
C) Open the Speaker's Bureau volunteer pool to students from related departments and programs such as Peace and Conflict Studies, Education, Indigenous Studies, and the Master of Human Rights.	Medium-term	Normal	[Secure funding to continue the program]
D) Develop a mentorship program to connect students and researchers.	Long-term	Normal	[Seek input from CHRR Research Affiliates on potential mentorship program]

Goal 2: Grow the CHRR's network on- and off-campus

Objective 2.1: Expand the CHRR's network within UofM communities

Action	Timeline	Priority	*Metrics* or [First Steps]
A) Attract Research Affiliates and student participation from more faculties at UofM to stimulate interdisciplinary collaboration.	Ongoing	High	*Number of Affiliates from new faculties* *Number of students from new faculties*
B) Support Indigenous researchers.	Ongoing	High	*Number of publications by Indigenous Affiliates*
C) Build relationships with the Inner-City Social Work Program and relevant programs on the Bannatyne Campus.	Medium-term	Normal	*Number of collaborative events/programs*
D) Support student associations that address inclusion on campus.	Medium-term	Normal	*Number of collaborative events/programs*

Objective 2.2: Build relationships with off-campus organizations

Action	Timeline	Priority	*Metrics* or [First Steps]
A) Support research relationships with Indigenous peoples.	Ongoing	High	*Number of collaborative events/projects*
B) Build relationships with community organizations interested in collaborative research.	Long-term	Normal	*Number of collaborative events/programs*
C) Connect with local high schools to foster students' interest in human rights.	Long-term	Normal	[Secure funding]
D) Facilitate collaboration with researchers from institutions across Canada and abroad.	Long-term	Normal	*Number of relationships*

Goal 3: Strengthen the CHRR's public presence

Objective 3.1: Prioritize accessibility for events and materials

Action	Timeline	Priority	*Metrics* or *[First Steps]*
A) Host accessible events, including sign language interpretation, hybrid format for events, and publicly available recordings.	Ongoing	High	*Percent of events meeting accessibility standards*
B) Develop more materials in plain language.	Ongoing	High	*Percent of materials meeting language standards*
C) Develop website to ensure it meets accessibility standards.	Medium-term	Normal	[Secure funding]

Objective 3.2: Continue to host public events on human rights issues

Action	Timeline	Priority	*Metrics* or *[First Steps]*
A) Maintain existing events series (e.g., the *Critical Conversation* series).	Ongoing	High	*Number of events in series held* *Number of attendees & views of recording*
B) Host named speaker series endowed by donor/alumni relations.	Long-term	Normal	[Secure funding]

Objective 3.3: Diversify CHRR materials available online

Action	Timeline	Priority	*Metrics* or *[First Steps]*
A) Continue the Researcher of the Week social media series and incorporate it into the website.	Ongoing	High	*Number of researcher profiles published* *Average views/shares of profiles*
B) Continue to develop and create interactive and engaging materials and resources (e.g., podcast and infographics).	Ongoing	High	*New materials developed*

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Goal 4: Build the CHRR's institutional capacity

Objective 4.1: Gain more support for CHRR activities from UofM administration

Action	Timeline	Priority	*Metrics* or [First Steps]
A) Participate in UofM's strategic planning processes.	Ongoing	High	*CHRR staff attendance at public Strategic Planning sessions* *Alignment between UM Strategic Plan and this CHRR plan, to be reported to CHRR Board*

B) Strengthen relationships with offices on campus including:
  o the Vice President (Research and International),
  o Community Engaged Learning,
  o Donor and Alumni Relations,
  o Migizii Agamik, and with
  o the Executive Lead, (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion [EDI]), in the Office of the President.
	Ongoing	High	*Number of partnerships/projects*
			Specific CHRR support needs met

C) Build connections to advance common interests with other units on campus including, but not restricted to the:
  o National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation,
  o Women's Centre,
  o Faculty of Graduate Studies (Peace and Conflict Studies, Disability Studies),
  o Faculty of Arts (Indigenous Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, Labour Studies),
  o Master of Human Rights program,
  o International Centre, and
  o *Canadian Journal of Human Rights*.
	Long-term	Normal	*Number of collaborative events/programs /publications/research projects*

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Objective 4.2: Access additional resources to support CHRR work

Action	Timeline	Priority	*Metrics* or [First Steps]
A) Secure permanent funding for ongoing budget lines such as current staff positions.	Ongoing	High	*Percentage of ongoing budget funded*
B) Develop more autonomy over digital space.	Short-term	High	[Create CHRR social media channels, e.g., YouTube and Spotify, that are owned by CHRR as opposed to Robson Hall]
C) Move to a more centrally located office space on campus.	Medium-term	Normal	[Explore opportunities to move to a more centrally located office space on campus]
D) Find additional sources of program funding.	Long-term	Normal	*Increase in general operating funds*

Monitoring and Evaluation

This section explains how progress towards the goals outlined in this plan will be monitored and where that information will be reported.

Semi-Annual Reports to the CHRR Board

The CHRR Manager and Director will report to the Board semi-annually on the progress that has been made with the actions and objectives in this plan.

This report may contain any relevant metrics for ongoing actions as well as the steps that have been taken towards short-, medium-, and long-term actions. The report may also contain notes about any challenges that have arisen or changes that should be made such as new priorities or actions that are no longer relevant.

Preparing the report for the Board will provide an opportunity to determine the next steps for any actions where the first steps have been completed.

Annual Review for the Senate Committee on University Research

Each year, CHRR staff complete an annual review of the Centre's activities to submit to the Senate Committee on University Research [SCUR]. The annual review follows a standard template that includes sections on faculty and students involved with the Centre, publications, other activities and events, and funding. Many of the actions and metrics in this strategic plan will be relevant to include. The monitoring processes for the reports to the Board outlined above will help streamline data collection for the SCUR report.

The Next Strategic Planning Cycle

This strategic plan is designed to guide the CHRR's activities through 2028. There may be small updates to this plan during that time as the Centre makes progress on actions and as circumstances evolve.

The next major update will be as the end of this plan's timeframe approaches, to plan for the following years. At that time (late 2026 – early 2028), the CHRR will engage with its Research Affiliates, staff, and students to review its vision and recent accomplishments and discuss new goals.

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Appendix: Additional Suggestions from the Workshop

Participants in the strategic planning workshop raised many ideas for projects that the CHRR could undertake. Not all those actions are within the current capacity of the Centre. This appendix lists the suggestions that were not included in this strategic plan. These ideas could be revisited in the next strategic planning cycle or if circumstances change.

- Compile a directory of organizations & researchers doing human rights work in Manitoba.
- Suggest that the University of Manitoba tag faculty profiles on its website with research interests to allow site visitors to filter across departments.
- Provide more information on the website about grants and resources for research.
- Hold an annual human rights forum.
- Provide support for members of equity-seeking groups to ensure their safety when sharing their stories and their ability to access platforms upon which to present.
- Develop a resource centre for people experiencing human rights violations.
- Advocate for more supports for current and prospective Indigenous students.
- Contribute to alleviating marginalization, bias, and access issues for equity-seeking groups.
- Take an activist role on campus to combat discriminatory practices.
- Build an advisory committee consisting of Indigenous community representatives, racialized students, and others who have perspectives relevant to CHRR work.
- Offer student-oriented experiential learning programs.

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