



It is a pleasure and honor to be here at this inaugural conference of the Federation of International Human Rights Museums. Thank you to the International Slavery Museum for this initiative. I bring greetings from Stuart Murray, CEO and Dr. Victoria Dickenson, CKO who would love to be here.

As we all know, human rights are controversial. Human rights are not black and white. Human rights affect the very soul of each of us. Human rights are often taken for granted by those who have them. And for those who don't, well.... Maybe that is where the focus of our work begins.

One of the themes of this conference is Museums as active campaigners. Do we want to be active campaigners?

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is not yet open. But we are now setting the stage for what will happen when it does open. Today I would like to discuss three questions with you – questions that are vital for us – and I would love to hear your comments in the course of our interactions in these few days.

- How are we discovering Canadian human rights voices?
- What can we learn from other human rights campaigners?
- What campaign involvements are we exploring in these early planning stages?



But first, let me briefly tell you something about the museum. The Canadian Museum for human rights or CMHR, is Canada's fifth national museum, and the first established outside of Ottawa.

The mandate of the CMHR is “to explore the subject of human rights, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, in order to enhance the public's understanding of human rights, to promote respect for others and to encourage reflection and dialogue.”

Construction is well underway in Winnipeg on Treaty 1 territory. We are working closely with Treaty 1 First Nation and Métis leaders to determine how we can best show respect for the peoples and the history of the region.

We are also working to ensure that Winnipeg's rich history of human rights, a history that has had a substantive impact in Canada, is better understood - from the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 – a story of labour rights, to French language rights, to Métis rights through Louis Riel, to women's rights and more.



We will explore Canadian and international human rights challenges, issues and triumphs in the museum itself, on the web, through its applied scholarship Program and through its programming.

We will present many perspectives and points of view. Our objective is to foster a better understanding of human rights – the common links between seemingly diverse situations and people – and even more importantly to effect change.

We believe we can achieve this through strong research and curatorial work, use of technology, and deep partnerships with human rights organizations and experts in the field.

Of course public engagement and interaction with stakeholders, communities and individuals is crucial. A strong oral history program will be a jewel in our approach to ongoing connections with people from diverse backgrounds.



And now back to setting the stage...

How are we discovering Canadian human rights voices?

We used various techniques. The first was a national survey in 2005 for a private group who initiated the idea of the museum. The survey asked Canadians what stories they would expect to see. 1500 people responded.

The second survey occurred as the project was being transferred into a national museum in 2008. The national web survey by the advisory council on the CMHR to the Minister of Culture and Heritage had over 2000 respondents who articulated the stories they wanted to see.

Recently a CMHR brand survey was conducted to identify the Museum's target market. Approx. 4000 participants responded across Canada and the U.S.



By far our biggest endeavor was our public engagement sessions. Seventeen members of the Content Advisory Committee conducted a listening exercise that encompassed 357 bilateral meetings involving 472 people. The committee also met with over 1200 people in 19 cities. The questions were varied but focused on:

1. What stories need to be in the museum?
2. What would you be disappointed if it were missing?
3. Are there specific events that you see as human rights successes or failures?
4. What do you see as our human rights challenges of the future?

Committee members traveled across Canada to gather stories, ideas and perspectives. At each of the roundtables, the Canadian public was invited to offer input, share stories, listen to other people's stories, and learn. This input will help develop the content, programming, and archives of the CMHR.

We heard stories of apology and reparation, but also stories of unfinished business and unresolved struggles. We heard stories of joy and sadness. We heard stories of anger and frustration. And we heard stories of success, change and inspiration.



Let's listen to a brief excerpt from the video report prepared by the Content Advisory Committee for the CMHR.

----- Play 3 minute excerpt

We have now completed Phase 1 of public engagement. The first step of setting the stage... Listen. Build credibility. Understand. Be inclusive. Build ties. Find ways to connect with people and let their stories touch our hearts and minds.

Phase 2 is about to begin, and my colleague Rhonda Hinder can tell you more about that.

2005 Pollara	2008 PCH	2010 CAC	Stories: Examples
The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms	Charter of Rights	The Charter as a defining instrument; A Charter Nation	Metis Bill of Rights; Charter/Chartre; Charter Challenges (disability, sexual orientation, language, LEAF); etc.
The treatment of aboriginal people in Canada	Aboriginal/First Nations	Our relationship with Indigenous peoples; Aboriginal women	Indian Act; OAS Challenge; Canada and the Declaration; Residential Schools; Portrait project; 60s scoop; Killing of the 36ed Dogs; 'Squaws along the Yukon'; Phillip Reitman; Judy Feldcar
The Holocaust	Holocaust	Holocaust	Declaration on Rights of Indigenous peoples;
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, passed by the United Nations in 1948	Universal Declaration	Canada's legacy/reputation: Conventions and Declarations	My mother's house; RCMP lists
The internment of Japanese-Canadians	Internments	Japanese Internment; Ukrainian Internment	
The 1994 genocide in Rwanda	Genocides	Armenian genocide (Georgetown orphans); Sikh (1984); Intergenerational effects ; Holomodor; R2P movement	orphans; Sikhs and the Holocaust; Desire Munyweza

We also need to do vigorous analysis and research of the surveys and stories we heard. Understanding not only the stories, but also the context that goes behind the stories.

The CMHR Applied Scholarship Program, still in its infancy, can foster creative and fruitful intersections between human rights scholarship, the stories we heard and concrete human rights practice. This too is part of setting the stage. It uses the stories to help draw the connections between legal approaches, academia, human rights activism, human rights agencies and the people themselves. This includes studying the methods and impact of change. In other words, what works? - an important aspect of campaigning.



But the word “campaign” suggests more than simply collecting stories or even engaging in research.

The Oxford dictionary defines campaign as:

To work in an organized and active way towards a goal: eg people who campaigned against child labour

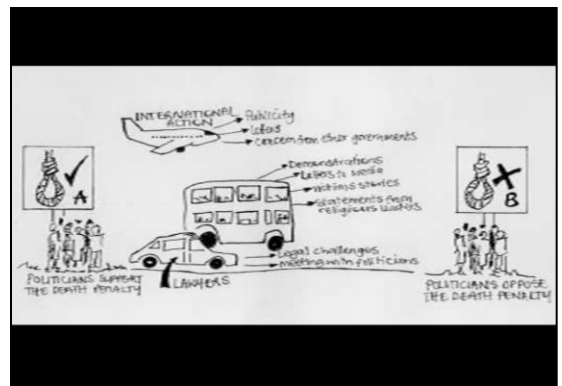
And this brings us to the second question...

What can we learn from successful human rights campaigners?

This question immediately poses several other questions:

- Does the museum want to campaign?
- Campaigning usually involves taking a stand. Does the museum have a stand to promote?
- How will the museum handle the inevitable controversies?
- Campaigning involves working for change. Does the museum want to be a change agent? What change is the museum working for?
- What campaigning methods are suitable for a museum?

These are not questions to be answered today here and now. But they may provide food for thought and dialogue over the next few days. To support the dialogue, let’s examine Amnesty’s successful campaign on the death penalty. How would a museum support (or not) such a campaign?



In December 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted a historic resolution calling for a worldwide moratorium on executions. The resolution was adopted by 104 out of the 192 UN countries. Until then the concept of a moratorium on executions had failed to progress several times at the UN.

Amnesty carried out a multifaceted campaign against the death penalty.

Then they examined what worked and why. Let's look at a few of their successful techniques. Some might work for museums... some might not.

 Learning from success – AI's contribution to the UN's death penalty moratorium, examines the influence of Amnesty International's lobbying at the UN and what contributed to the success of the campaign

Dec. 18

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
Margaret Mead, Anthropologist

WHAT MAKES A CAMPAIGN WORK?

This may seem obvious....Choose a realistic goal. In Al's campaign, the decision to shift from a resolution calling for the abolition of the death penalty to one calling for a moratorium was a key turning point. But for the idealistic, that was a difficult compromise.

Share the Power of personal stories: Amnesty found that the stories of former death row inmates were very powerful. : "These stories had a huge impact . Many human rights orgs have stories to share. And so do museums.

Avoid "preaching to the converted. It is important to dialogue with those with different opinions – this can be difficult and uncomfortable. Museums can play a role here.



Find collaborators and partners – within governments, NGOs and civil society. Collaboration with others makes the work stronger. However, it also means that the groups have to coalesce around the cause and the approach.

To use another world wide example... Groups working on Disabilities were much more effective when they found a slogan that they could all back and use widely.



Research: AI's added value was in its international reputation, its ability to research and present facts and figures. Solid Facts can sometimes demystify and diffuse emotional issues.

Link to grass-roots activity . Be close to the people who are in the middle of the issue

There are, of course, many other strategies... Technology has changed the potential for campaigns – but I will leave that topic to my colleague corey timpson tomorrow.

This brings us to our last question.

What campaign involvements are we exploring in these early planning stages?



First – awareness building. We hope our visitors understand what their rights are, and feel empowered to seek redress when they feel their rights have been violated.

But what about the rights of others? What about our responsibilities in the world today?

For example - How many people know about the connection between the coltan mines in DRC and cel phones and child labour?

Should we provide guidance for our visitors in using their purchasing power wisely? Or hold seminars on this? Or demonstrate against cel phone companies?

http://www.kindasortagreen.com/THE_DIRTY_TRUTH_LUAH.html



We will highlight human rights workers as a means of encouraging our visitors to make a difference. We want to reinforce the notion that one voice – your voice can make a difference. And when combined with the voices of others, positive social change is possible. The Museum will profile the multiplicity of voices and the myriad of ways that people around the world are working to protect, promote and enhance human rights.

Kwame Nkrumah
Vaclav Havel
Craig Kielburger
Rigoberta Menchu
S. Ebadi (Iranian poet)
Kim Young-Sam
Ang Sung Suu Kyi
Roméo Dallaire



We will highlight human rights issues. Some historical and international issues may seem far from our reality. How do we let them touch our hearts? Dare we highlight current issues such as FGM, censorship in China? environmental issues? poverty that come close to home? religious tensions in Canada? canadian mining companies in Africa? indigenous rights?



We will use Museum-led initiatives for active interaction between people
such as story telling clubs,
Human Rights film nights
Human Rights book clubs with a focus on fictional literature
Protest music nights
Clowning on human rights themes
Volunteer projects

One of our early projects was EVOKE - a multi-disciplinary art project. We challenged participants to use art to express their human rights perspectives. We received hundreds of submissions from across the country, and were greatly impressed by the quality, depth and significance of the artwork.



The CMHR will explore the role of the arts as a form of activism. The arts can cross the multiple boundaries of language, culture, age, gender, ethnicity, education, and socio-economic status. Artworks, photography by children, graffiti, film, music, literature, dance, poetry and spoken word can all be used to nourish a sense of global citizenship and the role of human rights.



We will encourage the development of skills and attitudes for social change through workshops and human rights training. We will provide immediate opportunities within the museum for doing something.

We recognize that even a small step is important such as sending messages of support. For example, Condition Critical, a project of Mediciens Sans Frontiers, offers the opportunity to send a message of support across the world.

Postcard Projects with Canadian children and children in refugee camps might be another opportunity or

Other human rights Letter writing campaigns and online petitions

Will we be on the streets in demonstrations? Some of our visitors will. Will we be at the forefront of activist campaigns? Will we get involved in huge world wide campaigns? I don't know yet.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/sep/04/sakineh-mohammadi-ashtiani-lashes-photograph>



And now - back to our questions:

- How are we discovering Canadian human rights voices?
- What can we learn from other human rights campaigners?
- What kind of active campaigning are we exploring in these early planning stages?

This last question is the most complex. The relationship between museums and activism is a delicate one

Some of our visitors will be visionaries, imagining what can be. Others will be practitioners who like to implement those visions. Others will come because it is an interesting tourist attraction. Still others because it is part of an educational program.

The world needs creators, thinkers, doers, leaders, workers and followers.... Regardless of where our visitors fit in....we want them to have the vision of a better world. A world where human rights are respected for all.

This is not an easy task for us, our visitors or our new Federation.. It will demand persistence and co-operation. The task is too large, too sad and too essential to do alone. We all need each other, our institutions and our visitors to work together toward a future world where each individual can live with dignity and freedom. Thank you

<http://fineartamerica.com/featured/hands-of-creation-evelyn-patrick.html>

<http://tc.indymedia.org/2009/may/photos-may-1st-march-immigrant-rights>