

**MALAWI HUMAN RIGHTS  
RESOURCE CENTRE  
(MHRRC)**

**Strategic Plan**

**2007 - 2009**

**The Malawi Human Rights resource Centre (MHRRC)**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

MHRRC was established in September 1997 after a one-year pilot phase with an overall objective of promoting and strengthening a culture of human rights in Malawi. The MHRRC works with civil society organizations to effectively support the developing democracy in the country. MHRRC contributes towards the consolidation of channels of free expression and other rights for the citizens by working with and building the capacity of NGOs and CSOs working on human rights. The belief is that the observance of human rights will in turn promote respect for human dignity, equality and ultimately bring about prosperity for the Malawi nation. This is being done against a background and realization that prior to 1993, NGOs and CSOs promoting human rights never existed and freedom of expression and other rights were severely curtailed. Thus, almost all human rights NGOs and other civil society organizations continue to need resource support as they are still in their early stages of development having only come into being after 1993. Even those NGOs which may have graduated into fully blown organizations still require scaled-up support at their current levels of operation.

MHRRC is a local Malawian institution registered under the Trustees Incorporation Act. It is administered by a Board of Trustees which is serviced by three sub-committees: the Programmes, Staff and Remuneration and Audit and Finance Sub-Committees. On day to day basis, the Centre is run by a secretariat headed by a Director and supported by three departments: the Programmes, Capacity Building and Finance and Administration Departments.

(to include a paragraph or 2 on the previous strategic plans and their points of emphasis.)

MHRRC contracted Capacity Development Consultants (CADECO) to facilitate the development of the strategic plan for January 2007 through December 2009. The workshop took place at Madidi Hotel on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> December 2006. The strategic plan document will specify MHRRC's points of leverage (uniqueness and how to use these points to position MHRRC more strategically in its task environment), the aspirational picture of MHRRC towards which it will concentrate its efforts to establish itself as a recognized and respected Center of excellence on human rights in Malawi and the SADC region. The document also outlines the vision, mission and values statements that will guide MHRRC in the next 3 years. In addition it also outlines the goals, issues and strategies to be employed. An explanation of the major shifts in the new strategic plan from the old one are given just before the actual strategic plan matrix.

### **MHRRC Uniqueness**

The following were identified as points of uniqueness that set MHRRC apart from all other similar organisations.

MHRRC is:

1. The only local NGO in a grant making for human rights CSOs
2. The first and only local NGO providing capacity building services to CSOs on human rights in a comprehensive way
3. Knowledge centre for human rights to CSOs and other stakeholders in Malawi and SADC regions
4. First NGO to acquire expertise and recognition in RBA in Malawi
5. Professional, disciplined, committed and exemplary staff and board
6. Ability to get consultancies that can contribute to towards MHRRC's sustainability

### **Using Uniqueness**

The following were identified as the points through which MHRRC can use its uniqueness to advantage in order to create more impact.

1. The points of uniqueness can form the foundation for transforming MHRRC into an institute of human rights
2. Marketing for resources and confidence building among different stakeholders
3. Convert the website into an e-library in order to enhance the center's image as a knowledge center

### **MHRRC's Ideal Picture**

MHRRC is a recognized Center of excellence in human rights in Malawi and the SADC region. It is a self-reliant and adequately resourced institution with professional and committed staff and board.

It is supported by effective and flexible policies, systems and procedures; structures and processes. The Center is enjoying cordial collaboration with key stakeholders. The work of the Center is translating into transformation of communities into human rights champions.

## **Strategic Statements**

The following strategic statements were agreed to guide MHRRC in the next 3 years

### ***Vision statement***

*A prosperous and just society where human rights are equally respected and enjoyed by all*

### ***Mission Statement***

*MHRRC is a human rights NGO that is committed to promoting a human rights culture in Malawi and the SADC region by working with CSOs and other institutions through capacity building*

### ***Values Statement***

- 1. Integrity – being accountable and transparent in the effective use of resources*
- 2. Responsiveness – being beneficiary partner centered in centered in service provision*
- 3. Equity – ensuring equal opportunities to targeted beneficiary partners and fairness in service provision*

## **Issue**

Lack of culture of accountability (human rights practice) at grassroots level

## **Goals**

The overall aim MHRRC is to empower grassroots people to take responsibility of their own development. The specific goals in the next 3 years are:

1. CSOs are able to mobilize grassroots people to hold duty bearers accountable
2. CSOs are able to represent the voice of grassroots people
3. CSOs are accountable to the people they serve, other CSOs and donors
4. Institutions are responsive and accountable to grassroots people

## **Strategy**

MHRRC's organizational strategy will be capacity building on human rights for CSOs and other institutions

MHRRC will employ a double - pronged operational strategy. This will involve working **intensively** with a few selected CSOs in supporting them implement human rights projects through grants provision, mentoring and coaching; and supporting organizational and institutional development. The center will support CSOs to implement specific projects. The projects will be area rather than activity based. The role of the center will be to provide resources to these CSOs and provide specific capacity building support to those CSOs in order to ensure impact. This strategy will be managed by the projects department with support from the capacity building department. The justification for this strategy is that the Centre will be able to demonstrate direct impact on the ground as a result of its capacity building support to the selected CSOs. Secondly, the projects implemented by the CSOs and the capacity building support provided will offer a basis for learning to inform the wider capacity building program discussed in the paragraph below.

MHRRC will work **extensively** with a wide number of CSOs and other institutions through knowledge management, training and facilitating networking. The Center will design a comprehensive capacity building program for an agreed number of CSOs and institutions. The capacity building department will be responsible for this. Combining the intensive strategy above and the extensive strategy just described will ensure that the Center is providing effective capacity building services rooted in practice rather than just theoretical and uncontextualized capacity building services.

The above strategies will be supported by two further strategies. One will be on building the Center's own capacity in order to match the demands of the new direction implied by the strategic plan. The other will be on ensuring effective collaboration with stakeholders to ensure synergy and impact.

### **Shifts in the new strategic plan**

The thrust of the new strategic plan is to bring more contextual relevance of human rights promotion and visible impact on the ground. In order to ensure this the 2007 – 2009 strategic plan has 4 main points of departure from the previous strategic plan. These are:

- More focus on poverty reduction in order to contribute directly to the government policy of poverty reduction
- Focus on entrenching a human rights culture and a culture of accountability at the grassroots level in order to link human rights to the real and lived experience of the grassroots people

- Expanding the target support from only NGOs to CSOs in order to ensure more connection with the ultimate beneficiaries of the Center who are grassroots people
- Going beyond a single strategy of capacity building based on merely a ‘training approach’ to many CSOs to actively engaging with communities through supporting a few selected CSOs with intensive capacity building support.

**MHRRC’s Strategic Plan January 2007 - December 2009**

ISSUE	GOAL	STRATEGY	PROJECT	IMPACT INDICATORS
1. Lack of a culture of accountability (human rights practice) at grassroots level	<p>1. <b>To enable CSOs to mobilize grassroots people to hold duty bearers accountable</b></p> <p>2. <b>To empower CSOs to represent the voice of grassroots people</b></p> <p>3. <b>To hold CSOs accountable to the people they serve, other CSOs and donors</b></p> <p>4. <b>To enable Institutions to be responsive and accountable to grassroots people</b></p>	<p><b>Intensive:</b></p> <p>1. Build capacity of a few selected CSOs and institutions to implement human rights projects in a specific impact area through <b>grants provision, mentoring and coaching; and supporting organizational and institutional development</b></p> <p><b>Extensive</b></p> <p>2. Develop a comprehensive capacity building program for an agreed number of CSOs and institutions through knowledge management, training and facilitating networking</p>	<p><b>Intensive</b></p> <p>1. Kanengo Community Policing Kellogg Project</p> <p>(to put the specific activities that MHRRC does or will do to support the project here)</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>(note: may be we may need 3 projects, one in the centre, the other in the south and another in the north or otherwise according to the center’s capacity)</p> <p><b>Extensive (to benefit from Intensive Strategy)</b></p> <p><b>1. Knowledge management</b></p> <p>Conduct research on factors influencing the lack of the culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The people in the impact areas are able to hold duty bearers accountable</li> <li>• The supported CSOs are able to articulate and represent the voice of grassroots people through lobbying and advocacy</li> <li>• The supported CSOs are able to demonstrate responsiveness and accountability to the grassroots people they serve</li> </ul>

			<p>and/of accountability and how to address it</p> <p>Carry out a mapping exercise on players in the field and the gaps</p> <p>Conduct research on relevant human rights topics</p> <p>Publish and disseminate research results</p> <p>Increase library collection</p> <p>Upgrade website to include an e-library</p> <p>Identify relevant websites to signpost partners to</p> <p><b>2. Training</b></p> <p>Develop and implement a comprehensive training program on the thematic areas of:</p> <p>Women rights  Child Rights  Cross-cutting issues (gender, HIV/AIDS and disability)  Rights Based Approaches (RBA)  Governance  Advocacy and lobbying  Policy analysis</p> <p><b>3. Facilitating Networking</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted CSOs are able to mobilize the people they serve to hold duty bearers accountable</li> <li>• Duty bearers are responsive and accountable to the people they serve as a result of the work of the CSOs benefiting from the Center’s services</li> </ul>
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			Exchange visits Study tours Support to international commemorative days Support to specific days as and when needed Support to HRCC network and NGOGCN	
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**INTERNAL CAPACITY BUILDING**

ISSUE	GOAL	STRATEGY	PROJECTS	INDICATORS
1. Inadequate capacity to match the demands of the new direction and priorities of MHRRC	1. To enable MHRRC to have adequate capacity to effectively deliver its operational strategies	Develop a comprehensive institutional capacity building plan for MHRRC	<p>Expanding a sustainable financial base through fundraising from donors and own efforts especially consultancies</p> <p>Implementing the staff and board development plan</p> <p>Developing, implementing and monitoring a policies, systems and procedures manual focusing on:</p> <p>Financial, administrative, human resources, monitoring and evaluation, learning (team spirit) and how to manage consultancies</p> <p>Positioning MHRRC as an eminent think tank on human rights in Malawi and the SADC region</p> <p>Developing a clear criteria on partner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the end of 3 years MHRRC is an eminent human rights think tank in Malawi and the SADC region</li> <li>• At the end of 3 years MHRRC has its own offices mostly financed by consultancy work</li> <li>• MHRRC has an effective monitoring, evaluation and learning system</li> </ul>

			selection to benefit from the services of the center	
<b>COLLABORATION</b>				
ISSUE	GOAL	STRATEGY	PROJECTS	INDICATORS
Insufficient and uncoordinated collaboration with key stakeholders	2. To enable MHRRC to Collaborate with key stakeholders in a manner that adds appreciable value and that creates synergy for MHRRC	Develop a conscious and comprehensive plan	<p>Human rights institutions, research institutions and universities in the areas of:</p> <p>Training Information sharing and exchange Using their constitutional mandate to extend the work of the Centre</p> <p>Development partners working in complementary fields like OXFAM, CARE, PLAN, World View, Action Aid, Concern Universal etc through:</p> <p>Sharing of best practices Integration of human rights into their livelihood work</p> <p>Government ministries and departments like department of information, ministry of gender, National AIDS Commission on:</p> <p>Information sharing Publicity/ information dissemination Advocacy and knowledge sharing Joint training ventures</p> <p>Local government and decentralization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MHRRC has a well documented collaboration strategy</li> <li>• MHRRC has memoranda of understanding with key stakeholders that is under some specific individual's responsibility and they are being consciously implemented and monitored</li> </ul>

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## **Implementation support mechanism**

A group of 3 or 4 people comprising board members from the programs sub-committee and management that provide leadership in the implementation of the strategic plan. The role of the strategic plan implementation support group is to monitor the implementation of the strategic plan. This group must have the resources it needs to do its work well. It must have a budget line, time to schedule meetings, authority to solicit feedback from people responsible for implementing specific aspects of the strategic plan. The group must have clear TORs which include:

- Follow up on people responsible for implementing specific aspects of the strategic plan by agreed deadlines
- Reporting to the **director/Board** on the finding of the follow ups and making recommendations to ensure effective implementation
- Ensure **developmental/departmental** and individual plans are developed for the strategic plan and that their efforts are consciously contributing towards the implementation of the strategic plan
- Organize annual participatory review and give overall feedback on how the strategic plan has been implemented in the year
- Ensure **internal** capacity building activities and collaboration activities are consciously being implemented

