

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

### Our Vision

The Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties envisions a society where diversity is valued, liberties are respected, and rights are lived.

### Our Mission

The Manitoba Association for Rights & Liberties exists to inspire action for social justice, human rights, and civil liberties in Manitoba through education and advocacy.

### About Us

Formed in 1978, the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties is a non-profit, nongovernmental, human rights and civil liberties organization. MARL envisions a society where diversity is valued, liberties are respected, and rights are lived. We take action in education and advocacy for human rights and civil liberties toward greater social justice in the province. MARL changes the way people think about human rights in Manitoba. We educate and create awareness for rights and liberties within the province of Manitoba. We build engaged communities and empower citizens to improve our society.

### We are Dedicated to

**Raising awareness;** We focus strongly on youth empowerment through workshops and activities that measurably increase awareness of human rights and civil liberties.

**Making a difference;** With the ultimate goal of societal shift, we influence government and public institutional policy changes to reflect and protect human rights in Manitoba.

**Community involvement;** We facilitate dialogue about human rights and civil liberties to build an informed and engaged community.

## Board

Russ Patterson, President  
Talia Taras, Vice President  
Stephanie Zirinio, Secretary  
Melanie Beth Oliviero  
Robert Walichnowski  
Linda Connor  
Emily Muller  
Elizabeth Andrea  
Avinash Singh  
Izzeddin Hawamda  
Tracy Schmidt

## Staff

**Sandra Krahn**, Executive Director  
**Mitchell DeFehr**, Education Coordinator  
**Stephanie Zirino**, Education Coordinator(August)

**Sartu Osman**, Community Engagement  
**Aatir Rehan**, Development  
**Quaisar Roonjha**, Finance coordinator

## Land Acknowledgement

The Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene and Metis peoples. Our primary office is located on Treaty 1 Territory and the birthplace and homeland of the Red River Métis. We respect the Treaties formed on these territories and acknowledge that We Are All Treaty People. We recognize the genocide and colonization endured by Indigenous peoples and are committed to working in partnership with Indigenous communities toward justice, equity, and reconciliation.






# President's Report

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2022-2023 was a strong year for MARL. We are growing, and our presence is being felt in the community. We recently advertised to recruit new Board members within the community, and we had eight amazing people apply. The candidates all spoke of the impact MARL is having and the important role we have. The diversity of the candidates is incredible—young, eager scholars; wise educators with a breadth of experience; different cultures, ethnicities, and heritages. They represent our growth and the future of MARL. I'm very proud of our work and the people wanting to work with MARL.

The Board members also had a great year. I want to acknowledge and honour some amazing people who will be leaving the MARL Board this year. Thank you to Melanie Oliviero, Robert Walichnowski, Linda Connor, Tracy Schmidt, Izzeddin (Izzy) Hawamda and Emily Mueller for your service to MARL. Melanie's depth of knowledge of board governance is astonishing and will be missed. Melanie and I joined MARL at about the same time, and I have great respect for her knowledge and compassion. Robert took on a project to update our constitution, which gave us flexibility in our Board operations. Linda, through her work at Manitoba Education, has been a consistent promoter and friend of MARL for many years. Tracy joined us a year ago and provided energy and a terrific legal perspective in discussions. Izzy joined MARL two years ago and is appreciated for his extensive worldview and energy. He will be staying nearby, though, as he will continue to work with our BIPOC committee. Emily has been a major contributor to the success of the Ethics Bowl since its inception. I wish all these people the best in their future endeavours and know they will always be MARL friends.

During the last year, our breadth of services and reach into the community has increased in many ways. Thanks to Sandra and her team, some of our awareness programming included the following: workshops and educating youth on legal literacy; ethics cafes; anti-racism letter writing lessons; and hosting an exhibit at Nuit Blanche, a major community event. We continued to support and promote school events, including the Manitoba High School Ethics Bowl, the Rotary Elementary School Peace Walk, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and the Youth Nuclear Peace Day of Action. We continued to build relationships with school divisions, hosting workshops for 1600 students in Pembina Trails and a Well Being Symposium at Maples Collegiate. I also want to acknowledge our youth, who have been instrumental in establishing youth networking events.





I'm particularly proud of our work for the Manitoba and Canadian National High School Ethics Bowls. As a former coach in the Bowl, I know how amazing this experience is for the students. When I entered my team from St. John's High School in the second year of the Ethics Bowl, there were 8 teams. Now, there are 28 teams in Manitoba, including rural schools, and there's a waiting list to enter.

A large part of MARL continues to be our community profile and partnerships. I want to first of all acknowledge our ongoing relationship with the United Way, which is so important to us. MARL began working with the John Humphry Centre for Peace and Human Rights, hosting a human rights advocacy training workshop. Because of the diversity and experience of our Board and staff, we continue to understand issues in our community and provide education and awareness for the community. This year some of the events we have organized, supported and/or promoted are: Colonization Workshop for Newcomers to Canada; Eco-Anxiety to Action; Gender Equality; Human Rights and Advocacy and more.

Lastly, this is my final report as president. I will be serving as past president this year and then moving on from MARL, although I'll always be nearby and connected. I have been on the MARL board for 7 years and have enjoyed meeting so many interesting people, and working with them towards MARL's goals and values. The work we do is incredibly important to so many people and I'm grateful for all the opportunities I've had with MARL. I look forward to serving in more of a support than a lead role, as I think it's important for an organization to stay current and for new people to bring new ideas. There will always be people that need help and support in our community, and MARL will always be there for those people. Have a great year ahead everyone!

Russ Patterson







# Executive Director Report

This has been a busy year at MARL. With the help of staff, practicum students, and volunteers, our programming has reached over 6,000 participants. We participated in several events throughout the year including, the Elementary Peace Walk, Nuit Blanch, Youth Nuclear Peace Day of Action, Torch of Dignity Relay, and UNESCO training days. We also provided 6 training sessions with youth leaders from across the province in the Frontier School Division. We hope to have a Northern Ethics Bowl next year!

In the past year, MARL has developed a Facilitator Training Program that introduces participants to MARL's workshops and provides them with tools to discuss complex issues. Once done, the workshop participants observe workshops, then co-facilitate workshops until they are comfortable facilitating workshops on their own. As a result, we have facilitated more workshops over the last year, sometimes sending 4 facilitators to a school at one time.

There have been several committees that have been active this year. They include the Youth Advisory Committee, that has planned youth networking events and workshops on eco anxiety, period poverty, and inclusive sex education. Our French advisory committee has been busy translating workshop material into French to provide workshops in both official languages in the fall. Our Black, Racialized and Religious Minority Committee planned a Legal Literacy Symposium in May with 50 students, collaborating with 6 different community organizations and facilitators. Our 2SLGBTQ+ committee has been advising staff and facilitators on how to develop and keep up to date with current issues in the community.

There have been over 150 volunteers that have supported MARL events over the last year. We are grateful for their participation, expertise, and contributions to the organization's growth. We are also grateful to community partners that have allowed us to engage youth and adults in a variety of different events and training opportunities. Over the summer we will be working on a strategic plan to guide us into the next school year.

Sandra Krahn



# Education Coordinator Report

I am pleased to present the education coordinator report from April 1st, 2022, to March 31st, 2023. Over the past year, MARL facilitators worked to provide educational programming to as many participants as possible. We have reached 4,374 participants through our various workshops. Our programming has focused on raising awareness and understanding of our community's human rights and social justice issues. Over the last year, two different educational coordinators have worked to develop and improve workshops at MARL. This has been an advantage as it has ensured a variety of perspectives on developing and enhancing the workshops.

One of the highlights of our programming this year was the workshops we delivered in March to all grade 9 students (over 1 600) in the Pembina Trails School Division. These workshops allowed students to engage with topics such as racism, discrimination, diversity, and inclusion. We received positive feedback from students and teachers, who found the workshops engaging and informative.

Our surveys identified five workshops as the most popular and relevant to our community based on participant feedback and engagement. As part of our efforts to streamline our programming and increase our impact, we worked to simplify our workshop advertisement to focus on our top five workshops; Addressing Racism, Power & Privilege, Know Your Rights, Taking Action, and Ethical Consumerism. Despite our focus on our top five workshops, we still offer a range of other workshops on various topics.

In the past, we had been providing a detailed PDF of workshop descriptions that included over twenty-five workshops. We found that the simplified recommendations allowed us to deliver a higher quality experience and streamline facilitation training to focus on the principles in five workshops. Additionally, it will enable us to focus our resources on providing quality programming aligned with our mission and goals.

Mitchell DeFehr



# Workshop Feedback

To ensure the continuous improvement of our workshop programming, we implemented a Microsoft Form survey to gather participant feedback. The overall score from participants currently stands at an impressive 4.51 out of 5, indicating the high quality of our workshops. An overwhelming majority (4.74/5) of participants expressed that our instructors possess a strong knowledge of the subjects they present, affirming the expertise and professionalism of our team.

The survey primarily targeted students aged 13-17 years old, and the most common learning takeaway reported by participants was the cultivation of positive attitudes toward learning. This indicates that our programming fosters an understanding of human rights and social justice issues and inspires a love for learning and personal growth.

Participants provided valuable feedback on areas for improvement, with the most frequent suggestions being longer presentations and a desire for increased interactive activities. Given this feedback, we have adjusted our facilitator training and workshops to use less content-heavy presentations and incorporate more interactive activities. These activities include Jenga block exercises, protest sign creation, collages, mobiles, yarn webs, and other interactive approaches.

Participants commonly mentioned developing a positive attitude toward learning when asked about their acquired skills. Among the survey respondents, 54% identified as Canadian. Regarding recommendations, 55% of participants gave us a 5/5 rating, contributing to an overall recommendation rating of 8.58 out of 10. We value participant feedback and continually use it to enhance and refine our programming. Regular debriefing sessions, formal through scheduled Zoom meetings and forms and informal through conversations and networking events, have allowed us to gather insights from facilitators and incorporate their input into improving our educational content. As we remain committed to providing high-quality educational programming that promotes human rights and social justice, we appreciate our participants' and facilitators' ongoing support and engagement.





# Community Engagement Report

It has been a delight to work as the community engagement coordinator at MARL over the past year, and I am proud of the work we have been able to accomplish as an organization. Our work this year has allowed us to reach new audiences and form new partnerships that will advance our mission of promoting human rights education and advocacy in Manitoba.

Our Black, Racialized and Religious Minority Committee created a youth symposium dedicated to teaching BIPOC youth about their rights in a variety of contexts. We partnered with a few community organizers, such as the Community Legal Education Association (CLEA) and the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY), to educate youth on some of their rights, which included discussions on employment rights, disability rights, youth in care rights, women's rights, and a sharing circle on the challenges faced by youth in employment with elder Clayton Sandy. We are excited to run this event annually and invite more community speakers, to provide BIPOC youth with the knowledge to navigate world and effect change in our communities.

In addition, this past year has allowed us to connect with over 1,000 members of the community through tabling opportunities at the Torch of Dignity Relay, MTS PD Day, Nuit Blanche, St. James PD Day, University of Winnipeg's Social Justice Fair, and CCED Net Cultivating Joy Conference. During this time, we also strengthened our relationship with the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights through a collaboration to provide their human rights training to BIPOC and immigrant community workers in Winnipeg.

These community engagement initiatives have allowed us to identify pressing needs within our community, such as interaction with the police, newcomer rights, and housing/tenancy rights. We are committed to developing more initiatives that address these needs and provide people within our communities with the tools and knowledge to navigate the legal systems and protect their rights. Additionally, we aspire to establish long-term advocacy programs to effect systemic change and foster a culture of human rights within our community. By understanding their legal rights, we believe they can hold those in power accountable and demand equal treatment under the law.

Sartu Osman



# Community Outreach

MARL staff, volunteers, board members, and practicum students have actively engaged in the community this year. Some of the events we were involved in the planning. Others we attended from invitations with our community partners. These events include:

**Ethics Across Borders:** April 9, 2022

**Human Rights and Advocacy Training:** 8 sessions between May 13-November 4, 2022

**RCMP Nonviolence and Public Order Training:** May 9, 2022

**Pride Conference Workshops:** June 3 & 4, 2022

**Torch of Dignity Relay, Table:** August 28, 2022

**Elementary School Peace Walk:** September 16th, 2022

**Nuit Blanche Kids Zone:** September 24, 2022

**Youth Nuclear Peace Day of Action:** October 14, 2022

**MTS PD Day, Table and Workshop:** October 22, 2022

**CED Net Cultivating Joy Conference:** October 21, 2022

**Eco-Anxiety Youth Networking Event:** November 9, 2022

**Ethics Café, Anxiety to Action:** December 2, 2022

**Sex-Ed for Social Change, Youth Networking Event:** February 21, 2023

**Human Rights and Advocacy Training, by the John Humphry Center for Peace and Human Rights:** March 3, 4 & 5, 2023

**IRCOM:** April 1st, 2023

**Legal Literacy Symposium:** May 3rd, 2023

**Pembina Trails Leadership Forum:** May 5th, 2023

**Frontier School Division Leadership Camps:** March 16-17, April, June 2-3, 2023

## Elementary School Peace Walk

picture by: Thomas Fricke





# Practicum Program

MARL values our relationships with educational Institutions in Manitoba. Since the pandemic started, we have increased the number of practicum students working with MARL. A main goal of MARL is to live rights. Practicum programs are an opportunity for students to bridge the gap between theory and practice. As you can see below we are working with students from a variety of different institutions and theoretical backgrounds. This enables MARL to approach social issues from a variety of perspectives.

## University of Manitoba

**Master of Human Rights:** Mitchell DeFehr, Stephanie Zirino, Sabbontu Abdushekur, Sara Gibson, Michelle Suzuki, Claire Li

**Pro-Bono Law Students:** Brandon Leverick, Calvin Ediger, Hannah Froese, Denise Sarmiento

**Peace and Conflict Studies:** Prince Duodu, Vanessa Tufuoh

## University of Winnipeg

**Global College:** Jacee Forsythe, Dylan Thompson, Damhat Zargos

**Menno Simons College:** Jacilyn Moreau

**Criminal Justice:** Cameron Franzmann, Lea Martin

**Rhetoric Writing and Communications:** Taryn Rittberg, Alvena Wasim, Precious Joi Gauthier

## Canadian Mennonite University

**Political Studies:** Hannah Drudge

**Redekop School of Business:** Anna Pyne

## Seven Oaks School Division

**Seven Oaks Met:** Emily Fars

**Maples Met:** Justine Rory Ramos





# MARL Committees

Over the last year, MARL has organized several committees to help us stay current with local social issues, plan events, and consult on educational projects. Each committee has taken on different roles. The Black, Racialized, and Religious Minority Committee planned a Youth Legal Literacy symposium that hosted 50 students in May. The French Advisory Committee worked on translating MARL workshops so they could be offered in French. the 2SLGBTQ+ committee consulted on a number of projects and guided the development of educational material to raise awareness on the topic of period poverty.



**French  
Advisory  
Committee**



**Black, Racialized, &  
Religious Minority  
Advisory Committee**



**2SLGBTQ+  
Advisory  
Committee**



**Youth  
Advisory  
Committee**

## MARL's Youth Committee

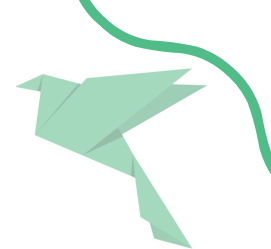
As the MARL Youth Committee, we are a group of eight Grade 11 and 12 students from around the city of Winnipeg. We are passionate about organizing events for youth on various social issues, such as climate change/eco-anxiety and sexual education/culture of consent. Additionally, we create social media posts about significant days and issues that we deem important, such as Human Rights Day, Bell Let's Talk Day, Boxing Day/Fast Fashion, and a small series of posts about menstruation, along with educational materials.

Emily Fars

Chair of the Youth Committee



# Finance Report

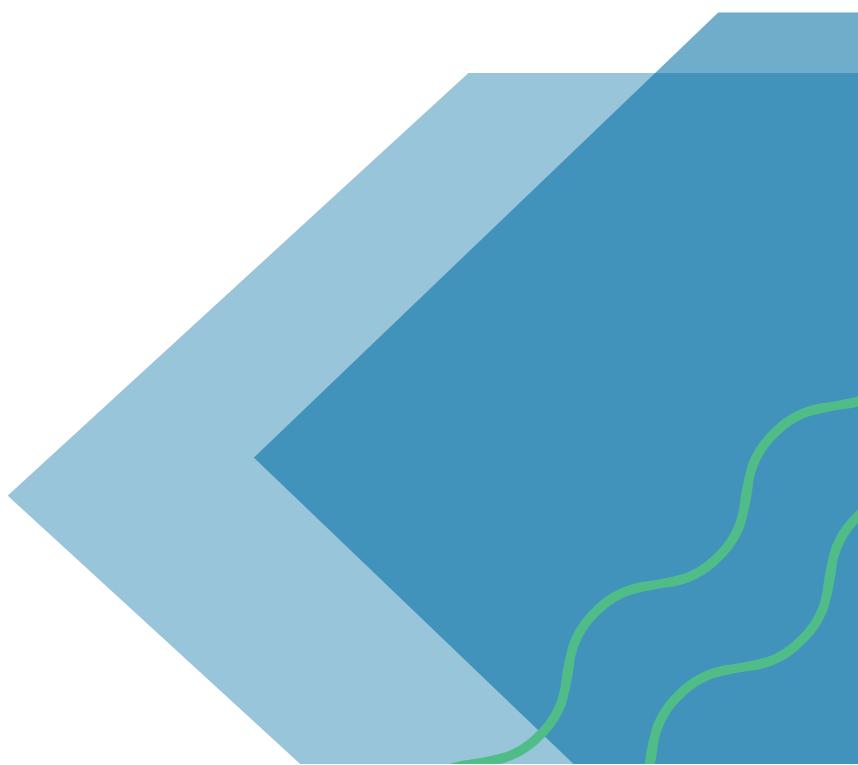


MARL's 2022 Fiscal Year was a rewarding year. The focus this year was to stabilize the financial situation and begin the path forward to eliminating the deficit. The 2022 Budget set out a couple of financial goals for the organization, the main one being to finish the year with a small surplus, which we accomplished.

We worked very hard on developing an understanding of our funding and our expenses related to that funding. We also began the discussion of developing other revenue sources to cover funding shortfalls. In the last fiscal year, MARL was successful in having a budget of \$300,000. We received grants from United Way Winnipeg, Canadian Heritage, the Manitoba Government, Winnipeg Foundation, Telus Friendly Future Foundation, the Canadian CED Network, and the Macdonald Foundation. MARL also paid approximately \$29,000 in honorarium payments to facilitators that provided MARL workshops and professional development opportunities for students and the community. With increased funding, we were able to help MARL in hiring expertise in marketing, communication, IT, and social justice. MARL was also able to invest more in marketing to improve brand recognition, promote workshops and create more workshop content.

Our goal for the next Fiscal Year is to make the organization sustainable in the long-run with more grant applications and increase our consulting and fee-for-service projects. With that goal in mind we will begin to put together a 3-Year Financial Plan and implement Financial Policy and Procedures to ensure the organization has guidelines to follow going forward. The organization still has many challenges financially. With the support of the board, staff and volunteers I have every confidence that MARL will be able to overcome these challenges. I would like to thank the whole team for all their hard work this year and helping me and the organization through this year.

AATIR REHAN



# Thank You Funders

This work would not be possible without the support of our funders. We want to thank our funders who have provided the resources for MARL to respond to current issues in the community! Through your support and commitment to investing in communities in Winnipeg and Manitoba, we can develop new initiatives and create sustainable programming! Through your support and commitment to investing in communities in Winnipeg and Manitoba, we can develop new initiatives and create sustainable programming.



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Cultural Organization





-Theresa Collins-Nelson She/Her/Hers CWHP-A

# Participant Feedback

"[I could create change] by informing my school about the information and how they can use that to promote change." - Participant Feedback



# Ethics Bowl

Last, but certainly not least is the development of the Ethics Bowl. Ethics programming has been strong, with Winnipeg hosting the Regional High School Ethics Bowl in February and the Canadian High School Ethics Bowl in April. The ethics bowl has grown from six schools in Manitoba nine years ago to 150 teams from across the country.

This year Ethics Bowl Canada received charitable status; we look forward to further collaboration on ethics programming in the future. MARL has also incorporated ethics questions into our regular workshops and networking events. We are currently working with the Better Business Bureau to offer their LIFT program in the fall. The LIFT program provides education on ethical decision-making in the workplace.



Congratulations to the Collège Miles MacDonell Collegiate that won the Manitoba High School Ethics Bowl. We also want to recognize École Secondaire Kelvin High School, Collège Louis Riel, and École Communautaire Réal-Bérard, who also participated in the nationals.



# marl

Manitoba Association for Rights & Liberties



## Check Out Our Social Media!

Twitter: [@Marl\\_mb\\_](#)

Instagram: [@marl\\_mb](#)

Website: <http://www.marl.mb.ca>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/marl.manitoba>

YouTube: [Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties](#)

