Strategic Plan Proposal for The Centre for Community Research, Learning, and Action (CCRLA) | 2025-2030.

Established in Fall 2014, The Centre for Community Research, Learning, and Action (CCRLA) has 11 years of experience in the field, offering learning programs and consults aimed at building the community-based research and evaluation capacity of trainees from the university, non-profit, and government sectors.

CCRLA was created to develop a centre of excellence for community-based research at Laurier, which encompasses:

- A **collaborative enterprise** between academic researchers (professors and students) and community members.
- A **learning environment** to build capacity for community-engaged research, program evaluation, knowledge exchange and action.
- Having **social action and social change goals** to achieve social justice and community betterment.
- **Achieving social action and social change** through community development, capacity building, knowledge mobilization, program evaluation and policy development.
- Utilizing and validating **multiple sources of knowledge and worldviews**.
- Promoting the use of **multiple methods of discovery and dissemination**.

Towards this end, CCRLA is situated within the larger community hub on the second floor of 232 King Street – a multi-room, community-oriented space tailored to facilitating trainings, meetings, and community-oriented gatherings.

1. Vision and Mission

Vision: At CCRLA we work towards cultivating an informed and engaged community through engaged community-based research and evaluation processes, where diverse perspectives are heard and the capacity of community members are harnessed to advance social justice.

Mission: Through our community partnerships and the leadership of our affiliated community-based researchers, we will

1. harness knowledge and mobilize the resources of the university and non-academic stakeholders to address complex and pressing social issues.
2. build upon our existing training programs aimed at cultivating engaged, collaborative research practices, methods (qualitative, arts-based, evidence-based, quantitative, etc.), and program evaluation expertise in service of social justice in Waterloo Region, and across the country.
3. provide a space and working hub for the cultivation of critical community-based research.

2. Strategic Goals

1. **Enhance Collaborative Research**: By 2030, strengthen partnerships between academic researchers, community members, grass-roots networks, non-profit organizations, industry partners, policy stakeholders and government for more engaged and impactful research outputs.
2. **Capacity Building**: Grow and develop resources, training programs and workshops to build skills in engaged community-based research, equity-focused evaluation, and knowledge mobilization.
3. **Knowledge Exchange**: Promote the dissemination of research findings through innovative, accessible and community-based knowledge mobilization outputs **to diverse audiences.**
4. **Social Action and Change**: Implement research initiatives that address social justice and community betterment through community development and policy advocacy.
5. **Financial Sustainability:** Enhance financial viability for the sustainable operation of a thriving centre.

Goal 1: Enhance Collaborative Research: Strengthen partnerships between academic researchers, community members, industry partners, and decision-makers for more impactful research outputs.

- **Objective 1:** CCRLA will foster more interdisciplinary community-engaged work both internally and externally to Laurier.
- **Objective 2:** CCRLA will intentionally build multi-sectoral partnerships with decision/policy-makers and leaders in relevant industries.

Goal 2: Capacity Building: Develop resources, training programs and workshops to build skills in community-engaged research, equity-focused evaluation, and knowledge mobilization.

- **Objective 1:** CCRLA will have greater resources, capacity, and reach. We will achieve this through partnerships and a comprehensive fund-development strategy.
- **Objective 2:** CCRLA will have increased their training program offerings, building out an equity-focused evaluation capacity building training program for new evaluators, in addition to a condensed program evaluation course offering that is tailored to government/industry partners.
- **Objective 3:** CCRLA will inform other relevant educational spaces, events, and initiatives that aim to build community-based research and evaluation capacity in Canada.

Goal 3: Knowledge Exchange: Promote the dissemination of research findings through innovative and creative knowledge mobilization outputs.

- **Objective 1:** Develop and implement a strategic communications plan (including social media) and an online presence
- **Objective 2:** Develop and implement knowledge exchange processes to support affiliated research groups (e.g., bi-annual newsletter, research highlights on the CCRLA website to promote knowledge generated by research groups, etc.)

Goal 4: Social Action and Change: Implement research initiatives that advance social justice and community betterment through community development and policy advocacy.

- **Objective 1:** Through the above goals, CCRLA will continue to generate community-partnered research evidence with which to advance social justice, amplify the voices of members of marginalized communities and advocate for and advance transformational societal change towards community betterment

Goal 5: Financial Sustainability: develop and implement a financial plan aimed at supporting the sustainability and viability of the centre.

- **Objective 1:** Develop a viable financial strategy and plan towards establishing a sustainable research centre.
- **Objective 2:** Implement a financial advisory committee to help provide direction on fundraising and fund development strategies through various streams (i.e. grants, donations, consulting, related training programs, etc.).
- **Objective 3:** Develop a business plan and refine existing and future learning programs and initiatives to enhance the viability of the centre.

3. Key Initiatives

- **Community Partnerships**: Establish new multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaborations with academics, policy makers, local non-profit organizations, and industry partners to generate primary data that can help to address pressing community concerns.

- **Training Programs**: Continue to grow, develop, and launch a series of workshops on program evaluation, research methods, and community engagement.

- **Research Projects**: Initiate research projects such as CCRLA's Equitable Evaluation project, which is focused on pressing social issues, leveraging the unique wisdom and skills of diverse stakeholders.

- **Public Engagement**: Organize and participate in events, initiatives, speaking opportunities, on digital media platforms to share research findings through more accessible modalities and engage the community in dialogue.

4. Metrics for Success

- **Partnership Growth**: A 25% growth in the number of new community partnerships established.

- **Training Impact**: Carrying out the training programs in existence and currently under development, with some evaluative feedback from trainees mapped into delivery.

- **Research Output**: Number of research projects completed and research outputs produced.

- **Community Impact**: Measurable advancements and improvements in community well-being and social justice outcomes.