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Diaspora Communications Centres

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Project Concept

Diaspora Communications Centres (refer to page 2)

PCP © Diaspora Communications Centres are a physical location with virtual networking and communications capabilities that serve a Diaspora community to best serve disaster-affected areas. It is proposed that three Centres are stood up: Montreal, Ottawa, and Haiti.

Project Provider

Peace & Conflict Planners Canada Inc. (refer to page 3)

Peace and Conflict Planners (PCP) Canada Inc. is Canada's leading private sector reconstruction and transformation corporation working in post-conflict and post-disaster environments.

PCP Canada provides real solutions to build economies and communities in transition. PCP Canada develops and applies advanced technologies focused on protecting, preserving, reconstructing, and accelerating cultures and economies.

PCP Canada uses a sophisticated system of leveraging existing community infrastructures, investments, and capacities for the solutions required locally.

Management Profile

Dr Sarah Meharg, Reconstruction Expert (refer to page 4)

The President of PCP Canada, Dr Sarah Meharg, is Canada's leading post-conflict reconstruction expert.

Project Background

“Relief and Reconstruction in Haiti: Harnessing the Diaspora” (refer to page 5)

PCP © Diaspora Communications Centres

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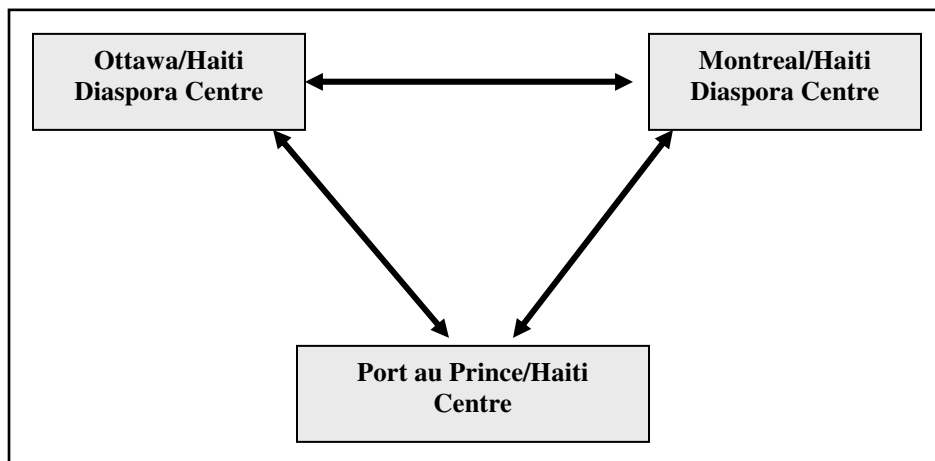
PCP Canada Inc. specializes in community-based centres that coordinate Diaspora emergency relief and reconstruction initiatives.

PCP © Diaspora Communications Centres use our proprietary evaluation and accountability framework, which assists with ingathering and measuring the effectiveness of all information pertaining to a disaster affected region. This system is based upon military intelligence gathering protocols for information management. This information can be used to support real time aid and reconstruction efforts as well as to preserve historic records for future lessons learned and best practices.

Each Centre includes the following elements:

- ✓ Communications
 - Internet-based communications
 - Pod-casting
 - Voice-over internet protocols
 - Social-networking tools (facebook, twitter, youtube, texting, etc.)
 - Web 2.0
 - Gov 2.0
 - Virtual networking
 - Telephones, voice messaging, and texting capacities
 - Radio Comms (CB Ham Radio, mini FM station)
- ✓ Fundraising
- ✓ Clearinghouse for NGO efforts in disaster/conflict location(s)
- ✓ Family reunification
- ✓ Grief counseling
- ✓ Government relations
- ✓ Coordination of relief (clothing, food, money drives)
- ✓ Coordination of information campaigns to affects populations in Haiti
- ✓ Public Relations

Example:



Company Information: Peace and Conflict Planners Canada Inc.

Peace and Conflict Planners Canada Inc. (PCP) is Canada's leading post-conflict and disaster reconstruction company, specializing in research and implementation of advanced technologies for reconstruction initiatives. Our services support sustainable outcomes for recipient populations, governments, national and international partners. We conduct research and write reports/analyses for larger companies and for government.

1. Reconstruction Services;
2. Economic development projects;
3. Turnkey Incubation/Innovation Centres that focus on economic, cultural and social acceleration;
4. Research, Analysis and Publications;
5. Urban and Rural Planning;
6. Transitioning of reports/publications to web-based presentations;
7. International Project Management

Visit www.pcpcanada.com to find out about our people, projects and services.

PCP Canada Inc. works to three distinct timelines.

Short-term Projects

- Emergency aid and relief projects related to transportation and logistics:
- Project planning and management
- Results-based measurement and reporting

Medium-term Projects

- Post-disaster and post-conflict reconstruction projects related to
 - o Economic reconstruction
 - o Cultural and social reconstruction
 - o Strategic planning and consultation recommendations
 - o Establishment of measures of effectiveness and performance metrics related to multiple physical and social reconstruction projects
 - o Online Diaspora Communications Centres (Montreal-Ottawa-Haiti)
- Project planning and management
- Research and Analysis
- Results-based measurement and reporting

Longer-term Projects

- Reconstruction projects related to
 - o Economic acceleration through business incubation (small- and medium-sized enterprises) through our proprietary reconstruction incubators (economic, social, cultural, health)
 - o Establishment of measures of effectiveness and performance metrics related to job creation and economic development
 - o Physical reconstruction of urban centres
- Project planning and management
- Research and Analysis

Contact Information:

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Management Profile
Sarah Jane Meharg, Ph.D.

Dr. Sarah Jane Meharg is president of Peace and Conflict Planners Canada Inc., a firm that specializes in economic and cultural reconstruction in conflict-affected areas, as well as new-use technology applications for post-conflict reconstruction environments.

Dr. Meharg is Adjunct Professor at the Royal Military College of Canada in the Department of Politics and Economics, and the Senior Research Associate in the Department of Research, Education and Learning Design at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in Ottawa Canada.

She is a leading post-conflict reconstruction theorist. Her unique theory of conflict - *identicide* (1997) - defines the attacks perpetrated against people and their cultural places (e.g. the Bridge of Mostar, the Bamiyan Buddhas, and the World Trade Towers). Dr. Meharg has a regional focus on the Balkans, and is currently researching the economic development; the environment of peace operations; military geography; and identicide.

Dr. Meharg has written numerous chapters and articles, including two books: *Helping Hands and Loaded Arms: Navigating the Military and Humanitarian Space* (Canadian Peacekeepers Press: Cornwallis N.S., 2007), and *Measuring What Matters in Peace Operations and Crisis Management* (McGill-Queen's University Press: Kingston, 2009).

Dr. Meharg serves as a research fellow with organizations such as the Centre for Security and Defence Studies (CSDS) and the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI).

Project Background

CDFAI Dispatch Article (forthcoming, Spring 2010): “Relief and Reconstruction in Haiti: Harnessing the Diaspora”

Sarah Jane Meharg, Ph.D.

Geopolitically, Haiti and Canada share a significant relationship.

Canada is home to one of the largest Haitian Diasporas in the world, and because we share the same hemisphere with Haiti, our geopolitics are intertwined on many levels. The extent of the devastation caused by the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti has left many Canadians compelled to help in some way. The will to intervene, along with our physical proximity, has created a ‘multiplier effect’ causing an unprecedented dedication of emergency relief aid and assistance—officially and unofficially—to the people of this beleaguered island.

The question now is not whether Canadians will help put Haiti back together again, but how best to create positive developmental transition in a country that some are referring to as a “living hell.” The multiplier effect could be strengthened through a few achievable projects between the Haitian-Canadian Diaspora and the Canadian Government.

The disaster presents an opportunity under the leadership of the Government of Canada (GOC) to harness the human and economic capital of the Haitian Diaspora by creating some ‘made in Canada’ solutions that harness our collective strengths—energy, time, money, and interests—to provide measurable positive results in the reconstruction and development of Haiti.

The Power of Diaspora

The literature on migration and Diaspora has grown significantly since the mass exodus of persecuted peoples in the early-to-mid 1990s in Bosnia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, among other examples. Diaspora discourse has shifted away from sociological and anthropological studies, and re-focused on the economic and political power these historically marginalized groups have in both their host and home countries. Of increasing importance in this literature is the power of financial contributions between Diaspora and their home countries. Remittances are the most compelling positive effect of migration, and estimates suggest that over US\$100 billion in global remittance are given annually to home countries. This amount is more than the total amount of registered aid to developing countries.ⁱ

According to the Inter-American Development Bank, the Haitian Diaspora in Canada remits CAD\$240 million annually for food, clothing, health care and other necessities to family and friends in Haiti. And, this only amounts to the total ‘official’ giving; there is much unofficial and private giving that has yet to be accounted for.

As scholars study the economic and human capital benefits associated with Diaspora, the literature suggests that governments should identify ways to harness their power.

Leveraging Canada’s Successes in Haiti

There is a greater role for the GOC in establishing an institutional framework within which Diaspora can be “encouraged and coordinated to maximize its development impact.”ⁱⁱ

Canada’s commitment to Haiti is a key element of our foreign policy and engagement in the Americas. The GOC committed CAD\$555 million from 2006-2011 to bring stability, sustainable development and prosperity to Haiti.ⁱⁱⁱ In addition, Canada leads the world in per-capita aid for Haiti and this may entitle Canada to take a lead role in reconstruction efforts.^{iv} There are some excellent Canadian-lead programs and projects in Haiti, including the tireless work by Canadian

humanitarian non-governmental organizations, especially in the wake of the devastation caused by the earthquakes and aftershocks in January.

So far, the power of the Haitian Diaspora and the commitments of the GOC and the NGOs have been working in parallel. Although some of their interests are shared in respect to development in Haiti, the work being done is often at cross-purposes. Diasporas have traditionally been distrustful of governments and their institutions based on their experiences in their home countries. There is an opportunity to create trust—and restructure the relationship—between the stakeholders.

For relief and reconstruction to be sustainable in Haiti, these efforts need to be coordinated. Linking efforts together by harnessing the Diaspora will help achieve goals faster and more effectively for the people of Haiti. Creating a fair and inclusive process to replace an inequitable and exclusive process is a step in the right direction for Haiti. Perhaps Canada is the best place for this new process to emerge.

The Diaspora want Coordination

Based on the suggestions I have heard from conflict and calamity affected communities during my field research, I have developed a communications centre framework to assist Diaspora, host governments, and home countries in coordinating relief and reconstruction activities. From a reconstruction perspective, there is no group more able to inform the interests of activities, projects, and programs destined to reshape a war torn or disaster affected country's future than its Diaspora. The future of a destroyed country needs to be 're-imagined' by its Diaspora in partnership with international stakeholders, including unilateral and multilateral efforts.

Following the earthquake in Haiti, I was contacted by two prominent Canadian-Haitians, Garrick Apollon and Patrick Glémaud, interested in promoting stronger coordination of efforts that would make an immediate difference to the people in Haiti, and that could support sustainable reconstruction and development in the future. Of all the reconstruction projects and activities that I could support them with, the concept of a Diaspora Communications Centre was a top priority on their list.

Diaspora Communications Centres

Each Centre could function as an interconnected hub that coordinates fundraising, communications, transportation, social/cultural programming, stakeholder activities, social networking, public relations, and brings together governments and Haitian Diaspora in the pursuit of increasing the effectiveness of relief and reconstruction of Haiti. Centres would have a physical location (i.e. Montreal, Ottawa, and Haiti) with virtual networking and communications capabilities that support a Diaspora community to best serve disaster-affected areas.

Diaspora Communications Centres use an evaluation and accountability framework, which assists with ingathering and measuring the effectiveness of all information pertaining to a disaster affected region. This system is based upon military intelligence gathering protocols for information management. This information can be used to support real time relief and reconstruction efforts as well as to preserve historic records for future lessons learned and best practices.

Each Centre would include the following elements:

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Each Centre could be stood up for three (3) years, and implemented and managed in conjunction with an arms-length private sector company in order to establish a reporting and accountability framework among participants and stakeholders. This time frame would allow for the following to be achieved:

- To underpin the further development of the GOCs institutional framework to strengthen its ties with the Canadian-Haitian Diaspora;
- To bridge the important 'relief-to-reconstruction-to-development' transition timeline;
- To measure the effectiveness of coordinated efforts;
- To leverage all efforts to create a significant multiplier effect in Haiti regarding sustainable reconstruction and development;
- To minimize marginalization of the Diaspora, and maximize its economic and human capital;
- An accountability framework able to track efforts within the foreign policy timeframe allocating GOC CAD\$555 million until 2011, and beyond.

Not only could these Centres help the Diaspora inform the GOC and other stakeholders of their interventions in post-disaster Haiti, they can also coordinate their own activities to best leverage energy, time and money to affect change amongst the people, policies and politics of Haiti.

Moving from a Whole-of-Government to a Whole-of-Canada Approach

Diaspora Communications Centres would effectively harness the interests of the Diaspora and move towards a broader 'whole of Canada' approach causing a powerful multiplier effect in Haiti. By leveraging our capacities in a place that has, effectively, become a *tabula rasa*, we create more opportunities for positive change.

Notes:

ⁱ Indianna D. Minto, "Diasporas and Development: An Assessment of the Irish Experience in the Caribbean", *Caribbean Paper No. 7*, The Centre for International Governance Innovation (April 2009), pp.3-4.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid*, p.5.

ⁱⁱⁱ Reliefweb, "Canada to offer more support for Haitian security, development" <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/AZHU-7YS797?OpenDocument> Accessed January 24, 2010.

^{iv} Peter O'Neil, "Canada leads world in per-capital aid for Haiti," *The Ottawa Citizen*, Saturday January 23, 2010, A10.