

January 2011

---

# **Diaspora Communications Centres *for* Development and Reconstruction:**

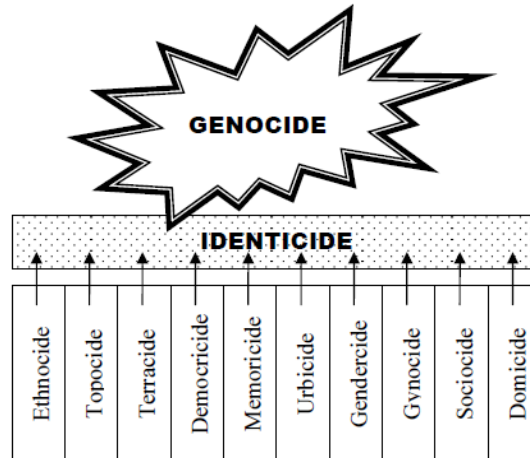
*Using ICT and operational planning to  
harness the social and economic power  
of Diaspora during times of conflict,  
calamity and peace*

---

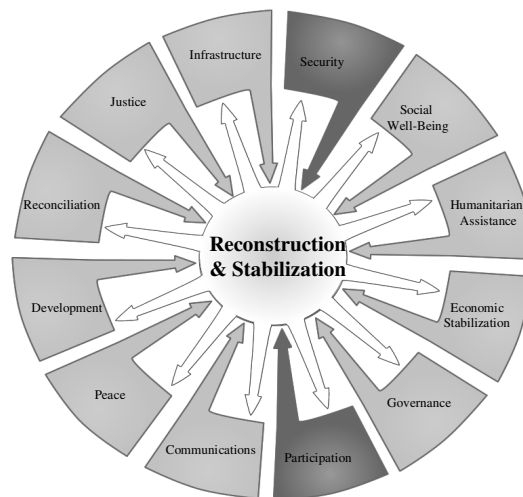
© 2010  
PCP Canada Inc.  
[www.pcpcanada.com](http://www.pcpcanada.com)

## Background

In 1998, the President of Peace and Conflict Planners Canada, Dr. Sarah Jane Meharg, developed the theory of [identicide](#) – the strategy of warfare that deliberately targets cultural symbols in order to weaken or destroy the identity of a particular community or group of people. During her doctoral studies, she recognized the patterns and stages of genocide, and began to think about what courses of action could be taken to reverse what urban theorist Jane Jacob called [‘the dark age ahead’](#).



Because the theory of identicide is political in nature and exists during times of armed conflict and war, as well as peace, it stood to reason that the opposite is also true. Identigenesis was born – the intentional strengthening of identity through the creation of places, programs and training of people. Identigenesis reverses the effects of failing states and potential genocide. The strategy of identigenesis – during times of conflict, as well as peace – is now the foundational theory supporting [Peace and Conflict Planner's](#) identigenesis ecosystem (i-eco).



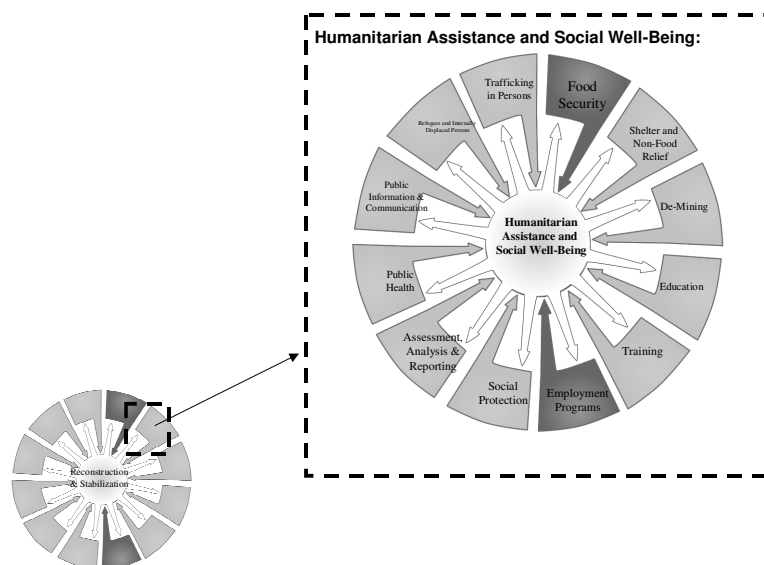
After the 2010 earthquakes in Haiti, Dr. Meharg and her team were compelled to develop a programming framework based in ICT and operational planning technologies to provide a common operating system for the myriad of individuals and interest groups, including the Diaspora, involved in reconstruction and stabilization. Dr. Meharg [published the concept](#) through the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI).

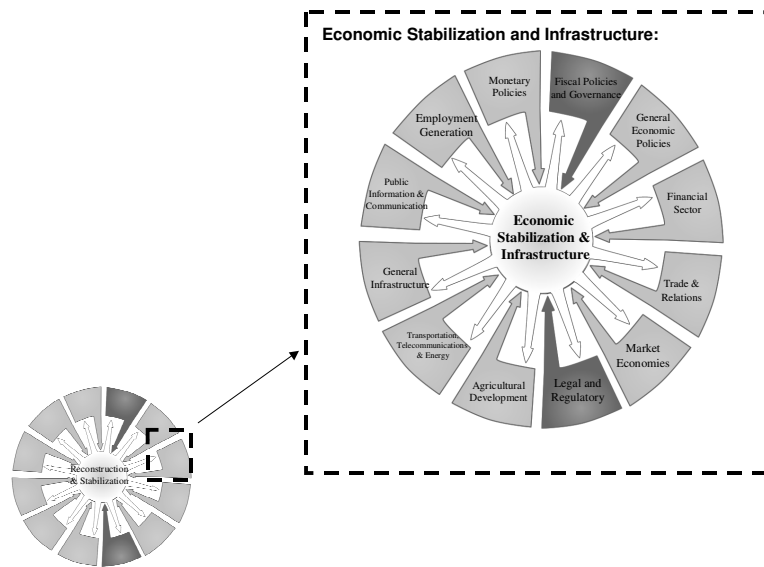
The Diaspora Communication Centres for Development and Reconstruction operate on a *common operating platform* based on the Peace and Conflict Planner's i-eco. The i-eco acts as a Diaspora force multiplier that accelerates development efforts.

The DCCs function during times of conflict and calamity, as well as during times of peace and development. Within each environment (conflict, calamity, peace), the i-eco functions to *promote social and economic prosperity* and *strengthen human capital* for best outcomes for the participating Diaspora and home country communities.

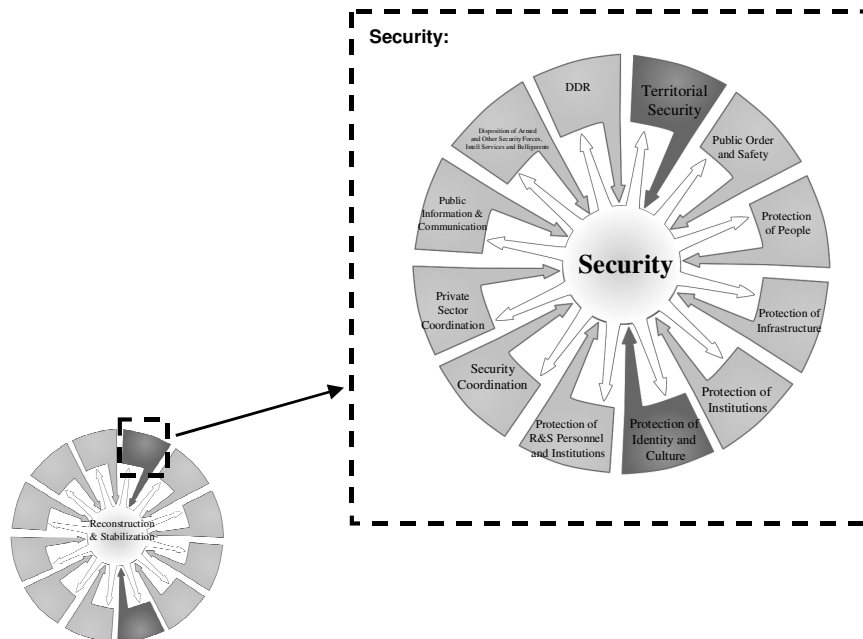
DCC for Development	DCC for Reconstruction and Stabilization
Leverages strengths to accelerate cultures and economies, and transition them towards robust development.	Designed for worst-case scenarios to best protect civilian populations, cultures and economies.
Promotes identigenesis.	Assists during or after periods of idencide.
Builds upon successful state systems and promotes non-state actor strengthening	Assists during periods of fragile or collapsed state systems.

For example, during times of relative peace the following programming nodes become a part of the DCC for Development ecosystem:





During conflict or calamity, the DCC for Reconstruction and Stabilization i-eco programming can be transitioned to suit a more insecure environment. For example:



## The Power of ICT

It is clear that information and communication technologies (ICT) powered by the web have turned all industrial models upside down. "There is now a new engine of innovation and wealth creation and a powerful new force that radically drops collaboration costs and as such enables

communities to collaborate on shared concerns, endeavours and challenges.”<sup>1</sup> People across the public and private sectors are harnessing the web to generate more productive and equitable services, bolster trust and legitimacy, and unlock new possibilities to co-innovate solutions to local, national and global challenges.

The web provides a *common operating platform* for the groups that use it. The common operating platform allows for divergent users to interface and benefit from the web, despite language, culture, economic, social, ideological, or geographic differences. The web has provided an open and level playing field for users. It breaks down barriers and allows for the flow of ideas and capital. A level of transparency is achieved through the web that was not possible in the old industrial based models of communications, relationships and business/economies.

The electronic nature of the web allows for information to be captured and analyzed to identify trends and to measure results.

The programming on the web, and the force of people behind social and economic innovations, are now motivating government *and* business to become more transparent and collaborative.

Not all programming on the web is positive, however, and the negative influences can create extensive challenges, resulting in additional negativity and even social regression. There is a lack of positive programming associated with community development on the web and only with international crises – such as the 2010 earthquakes in Haiti – is the scale pushed towards collaborative and transparent progress. This was experienced in Haiti when Ushahidi unleashed its very simple web-based cell phone program. It allowed the average person with a cell phone to identify, locate and report on field realities. The increase in quantity and quality of reporting created massive good will that resulted in faster and more effective emergency relief efforts to alleviate the suffering of Haitians.

### **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 that these historically marginalized groups have in both their host and home countries. Of increasing importance found 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 remittances are given annually to home countries**.<sup>2</sup> This amount is more than the total amount of registered aid to developing countries.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, there is much unofficial and private giving that has yet to be accounted for.

Diaspora communities are using ICT to help their causes. Recent examples, such as the earthquake in Haiti, are showing that Diaspora have an increased social and economic power that can be harnessed to create increased positive impact in their homelands. Successful fundraising campaigns used during the Haiti earthquakes harnessed the giving power of the masses using cell phones. By providing a text code, people could text the code on their cell phone to automatically send a donation to be billed through their cell phone provider. This simple act became a tipping point in the use of ICT for humanitarianism.

---

<sup>1</sup> Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams, *Macrowikinomics: Rebooting Business and the World* (Penguin Canada, 2010) p.8.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

## **Leveraging Canada's Successes in the Caribbean**

There is a greater role for the Government of Canada (GOC) in establishing an institutional framework within which Diaspora can be “encouraged and coordinated to maximize its development impact.”<sup>3</sup> Worthy projects are underway. For example, research from Canada's International Development Research Centre's ([IDRC](#)) supported the Caribbean Policy Research Institute, the region's first think tank, as well as the [Innovation Nations: Exploring Strategic Opportunities in Canadian-Caribbean Relations](#), of which Peace and Conflict Planners (PCP) was invited to participate using this DCC initiative. Other projects are needed to harness the intellectual, cultural, political and economic power of the Diaspora communities outside of government programs and bi-lateral projects.

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 reap the capital of this relationship—between the stakeholders. Cultural, social and economic development efforts need to be coordinated. Linking efforts together by harnessing Diaspora can help achieve goals faster and more effectively for the people of the Caribbean. Creating a fair and inclusive process to replace an inequitable and exclusive process is a step in the right direction.

## **The Diaspora want Coordination**

Based on the suggestions PCP has gathered from conflict-, and calamity-affected communities during field research, we have developed a communications centre and a programming 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. Many Diaspora communities have mastered the use of social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter and texting to coordinate and communicate not only their remittances, but their other efforts, ideas, politics, relationships, and concerns. Although these tools are ideal for social networking, they are ill-suited to nation strengthening.

## **Elusive Coordination and Increasing Complexity**

Although nation strengthening is the ideal environment for Diaspora relations, there are other scenarios that require systematic and effective Diaspora coordination. Lives become at stake when international interventions lack coordination. Therefore, a coordination platform becomes a necessity.

PCP has gained field experience researching and operating in conflict and calamity environments. These complex, multi-national environments combine the 3Ds – defence, diplomacy, development – and are vast operations the likes of which have never been seen in any other time in history. Not even the reconstruction after the Second World War can compare to the new complexities of international development and reconstruction activities in places like Afghanistan and Haiti.

These activities are more complex today although much smaller in geographic scale due to our advancements in technology. In essence, the international community – both the private and public sectors – has contributed to the over-complication of large-scale multi-national intervention operations.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.5.

Measuring complex operations and reconstruction environments has been an insurmountable challenge for the international community. PCP has recognized the current complexities, and has designed simple standards for user interfaces and front-end human systems. We incorporate complex tools and necessary systems into back-end programming which supports a positive peace end-state. PCP has been at the leading edge of the measures of effectiveness (MOE) movement and our newest technology standard has the potential to make a significant and lasting contribution to development. Dr. Sarah Meharg has written [the most current and comprehensive book on the subject](#) and her research findings inform the measurement and assessment system that is built into the i-eco.

### **What is the Identigenesis Ecosystem (i-eco)?**

PCP integrates ICT and our proprietary and customizable planning framework for development and reconstruction projects. We operationalize command and control tools that attain measurable results for our clients. Our model is called the 'ecosystem' and has been designed to help achieve objectives that reinforce peaceful, secure and prosperous outcomes.

DCC for Development is based on the ecosystem. It is a node which combines a) a systems perspective of the operational environment; b) an operational net assessment process; c) a relationship of effects, nodes, actions and recourses; d) the interconnected operational environment; e) a centre of gravity (COG) analysis methodology; f) an effects-based approach to operations; and g) international standards of essential tasks for development and reconstruction.

The unique combination of ICT and our planning framework is especially effective in peace, development and reconstruction environments. It is customizable and scaleable for any purpose within the essential tasks of development and reconstruction.

### **The Ecosystem Platform**

At the centre of the ecosystem is our web-based network platform cloud. It operates as one standardized software interface, such as Facebook and Linked-in. The difference is that rather than maintaining and managing friendships or business relationships, the DCC for Development and Reconstruction is a nation and state strengthening tool. It exists virtually *and* physically, and is scaleable. It is able to support one user at a time on a remote PC working from a virtual DCC location, upwards of thousands of team members working at the same physical DCC location.

The platform has four key parts:

1. Planning – based upon international planning protocols
2. Implementation – project management that supports execution of the plan
3. Communications – visual displays of activities and communications networks
4. Performance Measurement – a feedback loop for assessment, analysis, evaluation, learning lessons, and planning for best practices

The platform is designed as a command and control display, which supports users to successfully attain goals through visual progress indicators. At the front end, the software is simple and user-friendly. All main elements are customizable to suit essential task sectors and project, as well as user goals.

The back end of the platform is a complex programming interface and incorporates multiple planning processes, systems, communications protocols, information management, security protocols, and measurement/analysis systems.

The back end provides a robust measures of effectiveness (MOE) system for quantifying and qualifying the progress and success of each ecosystem node, from a single micro sector to multiple macro sectors of essential tasks for nation and state strengthening.

## Working with Clients

A client approaches PCP with a goal that they want to achieve. Consultations occur and a project scope is developed. The PCP team extrapolates the desired ecosystem from our planning framework and populates it with the client's specific project lifecycle.

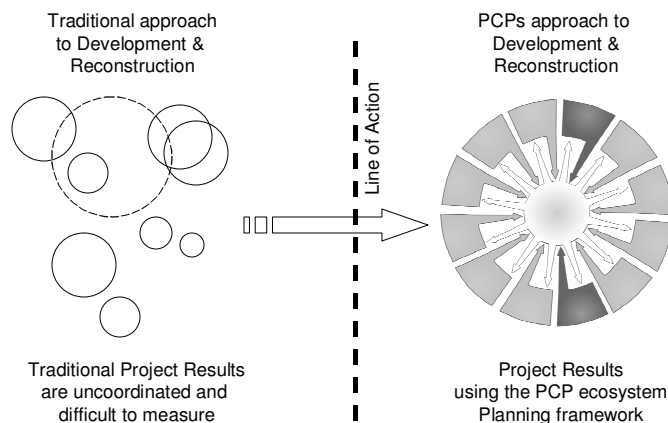
The point is that the PCP ecosystem is scaleable to suit client needs while offering the same robust system to achieve effective, measurable results. A client's project could be community-focused, multi-regional, or in support of a bilateral economic trade agreement.

The PCP planning framework is ideal for coordinating Diaspora in support of expanding economic, social and cultural opportunities. Our planning framework can access and leverage crowd sourcing, and incorporates academic, political and economic leadership. Open software and crowd sourcing contributes to the organic development of the client's ecosystem that produce a multiplying effect when groups are motivated, supported and rewarded for their input into community development.

For the same cost of a traditional program, which lasts between 1-3 years and results in a report of recommendations or a conference, the PCP planning framework provides a launch pad for cultural and economic development that outlasts traditional project lifecycle models.

On the left side of the following diagram are the outputs resulting from many of the traditional approaches to development and reconstruction, such as workshops, conferences, donor project reports, training courses, monitoring and evaluation documents, etc.

PCP transforms these valuable outputs and data from the left side and into supporting actions that can be measured and tracked by the i-ecosystem. Our system helps clients run their projects on a 24/7 basis with thousands of measurable outputs and lasting outcomes for target populations.





## Diaspora Communications Centres™

Diaspora Communications Centres™ (DCC) are a physical location with virtual networking and communications capabilities that serve Diaspora communities during periods of conflict, calamity and peace. The most critical investment in a DCC is its planning and programming.

PCP Canada Inc. specializes in community-based centres that coordinate Diaspora initiatives, such as:

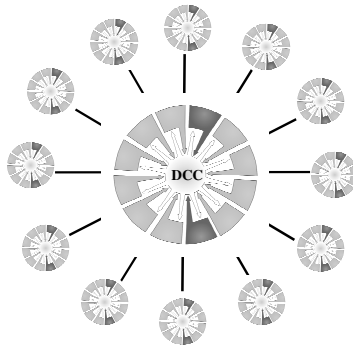
- Economic development
- Local economy acceleration
- Cultural and heritage stewardship
- Emergency relief and reconstruction
- Post-conflict reconstruction
- Reconciliation initiatives
- Post-conflict development

Diaspora Communications Centres use our evaluation and accountability framework – [PCR MOE](#) – which assists with ingathering and measuring the effectiveness of all information pertaining to a region supporting a DCC. 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.

The DCCs use a common operating platform that is based on the PCP i-eco. The ecosystem provides each Centre with the following capabilities/capacities/programming:

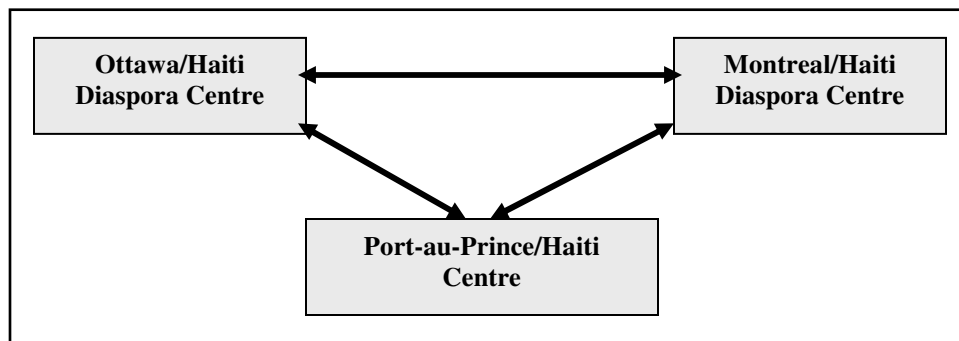
- ✓ Command and control platform and media centre
- ✓ Communications
  - Network-centric web-based communications
  - Pod-casting
  - Voice-over internet protocols
  - Social-networking tools (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, texting, etc.)
  - Web 2.0
  - Gov 2.0
  - Virtual networking
  - Telephones, voice messaging, and texting capacities
  - Radio communications (CB Ham Radio, mini FM station)
  - Effects-based approach programming (EBAO)
- ✓ Fundraising
- ✓ Business development
- ✓ Clearinghouse for NGO efforts
- ✓ Family reunification and communication
- ✓ Counseling, training and education regarding Diaspora
- ✓ Government relations
- ✓ Coordination of relief, aid and ongoing development programming
- ✓ Coordination of information campaigns to multiple publics
- ✓ Public Relations

Each Centre functions as an interconnected node within the ecosystem that coordinates fundraising, communications, transportation, social/cultural programming, stakeholder activities, social networking, public relations, and brings together governments and Diaspora in the pursuit of increasing the effectiveness of ongoing development efforts.



Using the centralized i-eco social networking media, such as facebook, twitter and texting, a coordinated Diaspora is capable of harnessing its enormous power in a constructive approach that no longer falls outside of government channels or remains marginalized by more 'official' relief, reconstruction, aid, and development.

During the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti in 2010, DCCs would have been well-positioned to assist with reconstruction and development from Ottawa, Montreal and Port-au-Prince:



Similarly, DCCs in other regions in the Caribbean islands could have created additional positive outcomes for the people and institutions affected by this disaster. Harnessing the social and economic power of Diaspora during emergencies can produce significant security, cultural/social and economic effects.

Each Centre could be stood up for three 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 in efforts to:

- Underpin the further development of the Government of Canada's institutional framework to strengthen its ties with the Canadian-Caribbean Diaspora;
- Bridge the important 'relief-to-reconstruction-to-development' transition timeline;
- Measure the effectiveness of coordinated efforts;
- Leverage all efforts to create a significant multiplier effect in the Caribbean regarding sustainable development;
- Minimize marginalization of the Diaspora, and maximize its economic and human capital;
- Establish an accountability framework able to track efforts within the foreign policy timeframe.

## Summary

The PCP i-eco planning framework is standardized and functions across essential sectors so that researchers, policy-makers, governments, and Diaspora leadership can access measurable development results. The DCC for development and reconstruction offers a powerful system that acts as a Diaspora force multiplier, functioning during times of conflict, calamity and peace. It provides a platform from which to develop an organized response during times of transition, such as after natural disasters or during conflict. This system is an investment in long-lasting economic, social and cultural stability. When implemented before conflict or calamity strike, development ground is not lost but gained, and cultures and economies are accelerated.

Diaspora Communications Centres effectively harness the interests of Diaspora and provide measurable benefits towards ongoing cultural and economic development.

By introducing Diaspora Communications Centres, the Diaspora, host nations/regions and bi-lateral partners can benefit from the multiplier effect because their energy, efforts, and money go further, do more, and have a greater impact upon affected populations, and this in turn, positively affects relations and partnerships, such as CARICOM.

## Company Information: Peace and Conflict Planners Canada Inc.

Peace and Conflict Planners Canada Inc. (PCP) provides real solutions to build economies and communities in transition. PCP develops and applies advanced technologies focused on protecting, preserving, reconstructing, and accelerating cultures and economies. PCP uses a sophisticated system of leveraging existing community infrastructures, investments, and capacities for the solutions required locally.

PCP is Canada's leading post-conflict and disaster reconstruction company, specializing in research and implementation of advanced technologies for economic and cultural acceleration initiatives, such as:

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

## Executive Bio

**Sarah Jane Meharg, Ph.D.**  
**President**  
[mehargs@pcpcanada.com](mailto:mehargs@pcpcanada.com)

Dr. Sarah Jane Meharg is President of Peace and Conflict Planners Canada. She also serves as Adjunct Professor at the Royal Military College of Canada. Dr. Meharg is Canada's leading post-conflict reconstruction expert and specializes in the research and implementation of advanced technologies for reconstruction initiatives. Dr. Meharg focuses on economic acceleration in regions experiencing economic transitions, including post-conflict and post-disaster environments such as Afghanistan, Haiti and the Balkans.

Dr. Meharg has received numerous commendations for developing her unique theory of conflict–*identicide* (1997) –which defines the precursor stages of genocide.

[http://www.carleton.ca/csds/docs/working\\_papers/MehargWP05.pdf](http://www.carleton.ca/csds/docs/working_papers/MehargWP05.pdf)

Dr. Meharg is currently researching economic acceleration; the environment of peace operations; military geography; and identicide/genocide.

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) and the Security and Defence Forum (SDF). Dr Meharg is president of Peace and Conflict Planners Canada Inc., a firm that specializes in economic and cultural reconstruction and new-use technology applications for conflict and disaster affected environments. Clients include both domestic and international organizations and governments.

Dr. Meharg develops “futures” concepts for application in her fields of study, and has a unique specialization in connecting defence, humanitarian, government, academic, and private sector interests. She has written numerous chapters and articles, including two recent 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 recently collaborated with the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) at the US Army War College in the publication “Security Sector Reform: A Case Study Approach to Transition and Capacity Building” (January 2010).

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/summary.cfm?q=960>

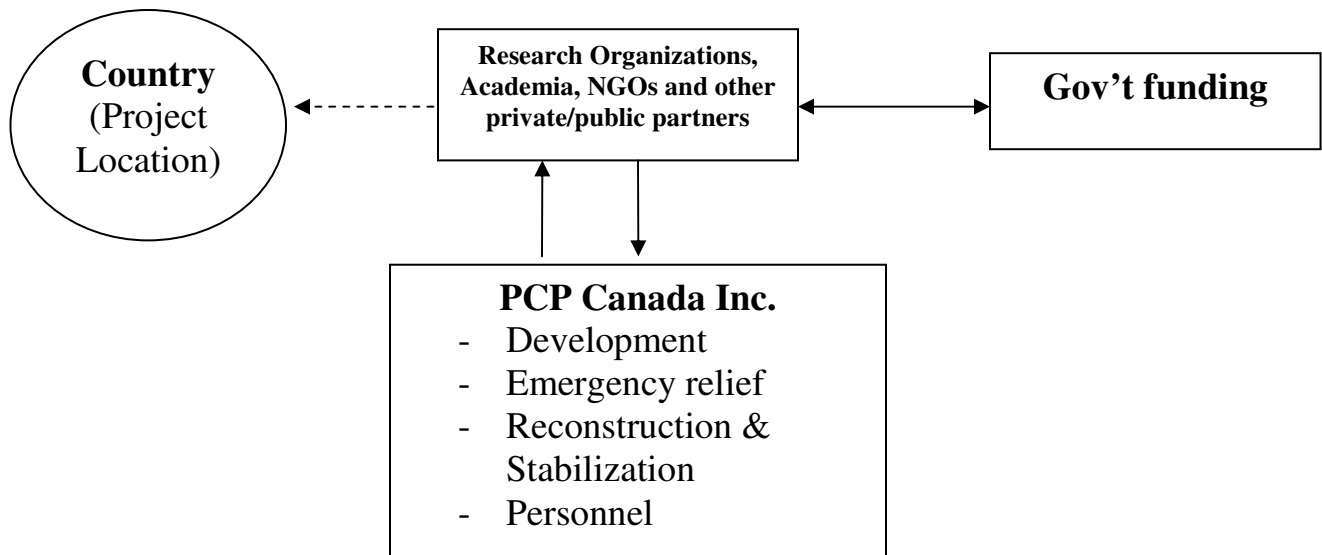
## **PCP Projects**

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

## **Our Process**

We link with partner NGOs, academia, governments, the security and defence sector, and communities that have access to donor or government project funding – including emergency relief funding – and other Government of Canada funding.

PCP Canada Inc. is Canada’s leading private sector post-disaster and post-conflict reconstruction company. Our staff is experienced with reconstruction environments and acts professionally within the international community SPHERE standards and code of conduct.



We specialize in providing expertise from humanitarian, academic, defence, security, and the public and private sectors to create integrated innovative approaches that contribute to environments where systems are failing and threats of conflict exist.

**Contact Information:**

Peace and Conflict Planners Canada Inc. (PCP)  
PO Box 632, Chesterville, ON, Canada K0C 1H0  
+1 613 448-1144  
[www.pcpcanada.com](http://www.pcpcanada.com)  
[mehargs@pcpcanada.com](mailto:mehargs@pcpcanada.com)