Civilian Peace Service Canada (CPSC)

Peace Professional Accreditation

Pilot Project Report

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February 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canadian Peace Service Canada (CPSC) Goal:

Shortly after an exploratory conference in 2003 the following goal for the Civilian Peace Service Canada (CPSC) was agreed upon: *To build a sustainable peace, at home and abroad, in partnership with local communities, through establishment in a phased manner of the Civilian Peace Service Canada, which facilitates the training and accreditation of qualified civilians to promote and further the non-violent resolution of conflict.*

Identifying a Need for Accrediting Peace Professionals:

Subsequent to the holding of several conferences and extensive research from 2003 through 2007, CPSC identified a specific need in the peace and conflict prevention / resolution field for a standardized methodology to assess and accredit professionals in this field of endeavour. It was determined that, like doctors, lawyers, engineers and soldiers, peace workers need to be assessed and accredited for competence and professionalism, and that doing so had the potential to prevent and stop major conflicts as well as have a number of other long and short-term positive outcomes, among them:

- Enhanced effectiveness of peace workers and consistency of approach;
- Reduction in unintended harm caused by well-meaning, unaccredited peace workers;
- Increased credibility of peace professionals leading to higher level input in national and international decision making.

CPSC's thorough assessment of civilian peace services around the world identified an unmet need for accredited peace professionals: 1) to satisfy the growing demand for qualified civilians, as evidenced by the UN Secretary General's report on mediation requirements (April 8, 2009); and 2) to provide a standard for assessing the qualifications of disparate civilian peace workers.[1]

Developing and Piloting a Methodology for Accrediting Peace Professionals:

In 2008, CPSC developed a detailed and ground-breaking methodology for assessing professionalism in the "peace field" based upon a set of Core Values and Key Competencies. Since 2008, this methodology has undergone continuing review and examination, most recently by way of a pilot project whereby five individuals volunteered to be assessed for accreditation using this methodology. A detailed description of the methodology is provided in section 2.3 of this report.

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[1] Documented in the CPSC *White Paper,* (July 2007):
http://www.civilianpeaceservice.ca/documents/exec_summary-en.pdf.

Conclusions / Recommendations:

The pilot project has found that the CPSC Accreditation Assessment methodology is fundamentally sound. This includes an overall sense that the Core Values and Key Competencies are generally consistent with what experts in conflict prevention and resolution as well as competency based assessment require of professional practitioners, and that they offer an excellent base for an effective methodology to assess the professionalism of candidates. This being said, a number of key considerations for improvements to the model and methodology emerged, including:

1) Modifying the manner in which information is requested from references, e.g., always offering the option of conducting an oral interview rather than a written reference;

2) Using prescribed scenarios, or variations on this theme (including group exercises), to illicit "real-life" responses from candidates to a greater degree than the current methodology;

3) Adding additional structure, perhaps a numerical scoring system, to the assessment of each candidate's responses throughout the process. This might also include a weighting system for the Values and Competencies components and then for each value and competency within these two components;

4) Undertaking a review of the current Core Values and Key Competencies set, as well as the definitions of each. One of the aims will be to build into the process the means to determine the appropriateness of candidates' competencies in cross-cultural and international environments;

5) Conducting a thorough review of CPSC methodology documentation to bring it into alignment, i.e., some changes were made to specific tools during the pilot to address immediate requirements, but impacts of these changes on other sections were not always carried over;

6) Constructing Assessment Boards in teams such that there will always be at least 4 potential Board members and 2 observers to draw upon. This would avoid delays by ensuring the ongoing availability of a Board quorum (3 Board members and 1 Observer);

7) Considering introduction of a fee for the Accreditation service in order to promote the quality of the process being offered;

8) Promoting the Accreditation Process as a tool for those not yet experienced in the peace field, e.g., invite applicants who may not yet have in-depth peace work experience but who would like to prepare for this kind of work;

9) Establishing an Accreditation Process Secretariat to support the Board in its work and to monitor the development of required reports and documentation.

Civilian Peace Service Canada (CPSC)
Peace Professional Accreditation Pilot Project Report

1.0 CONTEXT / BACKGROUND

The goal of the CPSC is:
To build a sustainable peace, at home and abroad, in partnership with local communities, through establishment in a phased manner of the Civilian Peace Service Canada which facilitates the training and accreditation of qualified civilians to promote and further the non-violent resolution of conflict.[2]

There is national and global recognition of the need for an increased role of civilians in the promotion of non-violent means to prevent, transform, and resolve violent conflict, including a call by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan as far back as 2001 for the "mainstreaming" of conflict prevention and for international and regional organizations to work more closely with civil society.

Canada's International Policy Statement (April, 2005), which explicitly acknowledges that Canada is "…a highly successful liberal democracy, with both a regional destiny and global responsibilities", pledges to "actively support the reform agenda of the 2004 UN High Level Panel Report, particularly its recommendations relating to the Responsibility to Protect, the creation of a civilian Peacebuilding Commission, and reform of the UN Human Rights Commission".

Other countries are leading the way in the establishment of civilian peace organizations. In Germany, a Civilian Peace Service (Ziviler Friedendienst) has been in operation since 1999. In the UK, efforts to create a similar service are well underway and significant training of civilians has taken place. Throughout Europe from Sweden to Italy civilian peace service initiatives of various kinds are taking root, embraced by a supportive European Network. Canada can learn from, and build upon, these initiatives.

With a history of peacekeeping and support to civil society, as well as its more recent emphasis on democratic development, and the training of police and other security service support in areas of conflict, Canada is in a unique position to make a meaningful difference in preventing and reducing conflict and improving human welfare around the world. We also have a broad range of expertise, military and non-military, a history of non-intervention and peacemaking, and "the largest and most openly accessible national civilian roster in the world."[3] Canada is, therefore,

[2] This goal emerged from a 2003 exploratory conference.
[3] Responsibility to Protect discussion paper, Paul Larose-Edwards (September, 2003).

well placed to build upon past achievements and to play a leadership role in providing civilian expertise that offers non-violent alternatives for lessening or resolving conflict, both domestically and internationally. It is in this context that the Civilian Peace Service Canada (CPSC) is being developed.

The CPSC Accreditation project recognizes, assesses, and registers Canadian capacity to prevent conflict where possible, to respond constructively to conflict situations both nationally and internationally where required, and to promote respect for life and human dignity. The aim is to identify a cadre of peace professionals to provide competent, focused, non-violent peace transformation capacity in cooperation with existing organizations both in Canada and abroad. CPSC as a program is, therefore, foreseen as a partnership on several levels: government and NGOs; Canadian NGOs and international players; and Canadian NGOs and local or regional NGOs. The form and nature of these partnerships will vary depending on specific circumstances. CPSC builds upon the existing mandates and strengths of these organizations, whether they are in recruitment, assessment, training, or placement. Its strategic value added lies in CPSC's groundbreaking definition of competency- and value-based assessment in this field. Governing principles are respect for human dignity, the right to mental and physical integrity, and the right to self-determination of individuals and groups.

2.0   PEACE PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION PROJECT

2.1   Introduction

CPSC's thorough assessment of civilian peace services around the world identified an unmet need for accredited peace professionals: 1) to satisfy the growing demand for qualified civilians, as evidenced by the UN Secretary General's report on mediation requirements (April 8, 2009); and 2) to provide a standard for assessing the qualifications of disparate civilian peace workers.[4] While a plethora of training institutions provide peace-related training, ranging from a few days to post-doctoral programs, there is no professional standard for accreditation. This seriously complicates the timely placement and performance of peace workers in areas of conflict.

To help meet this need, CPSC has developed and successfully piloted a methodology for accrediting peace professionals. Competency-based assessment, built upon a thorough literature review, is used, tested, and modified with input by international experts in the conflict resolution field. This input included a 2007 conference[5] in Canada with internationally renowned peace researcher and practitioner, Johan Galtung. Other related conferences have also been held.

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[4] Documented in the CPSC *White Paper* (July 2007):
http://www.civilianpeaceservice.ca/documents/exec_summary-en.pdf.
[5] http://www.civilianpeaceservice.ca/peace_as_a_profession-2007.php.

The broader contexts within which these issues have relevance, and the specific issues this project is addressing, are:

- The current difficulty in accessing competent civilian resources for peace work in a timely fashion:
  - The UN and other international institutions have regularly voiced frustration about accessing competent civilians for peace-related interventions. As Ban Ki Moon said: "With the peaceful settlement of disputes a key element of the United Nations' mission, the world body's mediation capacity–which is thwarted by the limited number of experienced mediators and the lack of sufficient financial resources–must be bolstered. Too often in the past, mediators have been dispatched without the full benefit of specialized training and background information, giving United Nations efforts an ad hoc quality, too dependent on trial and error";[6]
  - Canadian parliamentarians have told CPSC that their challenge, when seeking competent guidance and advice, is how to determine relative capacity among all the organizations and individuals in Canada professing to provide relevant services;[7]
- The need for professional standards to offset the wide range of attitudes, world views, and levels of competence currently attached to the label "peace worker";
- The need for a roster of qualified peace professionals on call for rapid deployment to conflict zones and to minimize ineffective, and even harmful, outcomes resulting from the placement of under-trained peace workers;
- The need to provide career path opportunities in peace work to attract and retain high quality professionals and to inspire youth.

Thousands of organizations and millions of individuals worldwide are working to develop and implement non-violent means of resolving conflict. The question is where, how, and when are these efforts best deployed? As in the medical field, where some are accredited as best suited to be general practitioners, others to perform open heart surgery, and others still to provide valuable support services (whether as volunteers or employees), so too in the peace field there is an equivalent need for standardized, specialized, and sufficient competence. Unlike the medical field, however, there are no corresponding tools in the peace field for distinguishing candidates best suited, for example, for senior level international diplomacy, high-level mediation, or grassroots volunteer work. This has been a recurring theme in CPSC research and discussions, whether with UN representatives, government, military, or other personnel. Indeed, military personnel contrast their years of training for work in areas of conflict, with weeks of training, if any, of many of their peace worker counterparts.

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[6] UN Secretary General Report on Enhancing Mediation (April, 2009): http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=s/2009/189.
[7] Presentation to Liberal Caucus Committee on Canada and the World, April 9, 2008.

The complexity of conflict and its peaceful resolution, as well as the urgency of many placements, call for professional standards for peace workers equivalent to those for doctors, engineers, and others, so that potential employers can effectively and urgently select:

- Candidates with the most appropriate motivation for effective placement, including core values (or personal suitability); and
- Candidates with the right competencies for achieving desired outcomes.

Although many currently involved in the peace and conflict resolution practice consider the assessment of values to be fundamental for intervening effectively in situations of conflict, few have tackled the complexities and sensitivities associated with assessing values. Consequently, the CPSC Accreditation process has done considerable and ground-breaking work in designing comprehensive assessment tools, including for the assessment of Core Values (detailed below).

The health sector has been working on this issue since the late 1990's when staff at McMaster University became frustrated with the deficiency of traditional interviews in evaluating medical school applicants for their personal suitability in the field. In a *Maclean's* magazine article entitled "Let's All Play Doctor,"[8] Jack Rosenfeld, professor emeritus in pathology and molecular medicine, is quoted as saying, "The interview process was letting in people who should not have gotten in and excluding people who should have." The article goes on to say that the process developed by McMaster University is designed to "assess soft skills" such as "communication, problem solving, judgement, life experience, ethics, professionalism, empathy and so on."

This is what CPSC's values-based methodology is designed to do for peace workers. At issue is not whether candidates have "faulty" or "deficient" values, but rather whether their particular value set is appropriate for the kinds of work being contemplated for peace professionals.

CPSC's competency-based methodology will also assess graduates of the many courses in conflict resolution, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, conflict transformation, arbitration, etc, against CPSC's standards of peace professionalism. This would counteract current practises whereby graduates from courses ranging in length from a few days to a few years are indiscriminately labelled "experts" in the field without sufficient attention to standardized course content, student comprehension, related practical experience, or professional achievement.

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[8] *Maclean's* magazine article titled "Let's All Play Doctor," Sept. 21'st edition, Page 50 and 51.

2.2   Scope of CPSC's Accreditation Project

Please refer to the following table for direction regarding what the CPSC accreditation project does, and does not, address:

	Accreditation Project Does Include	**Accreditation Project Does Not Include**
1.	Standards for assessing peace professionalism, based upon required values and competencies	Training in the required values and competencies
2.	An assessment methodology based upon a CV review, self-assessment, personal and professional references, and two interviews, first for values and then for competencies	Employment and / or deployment services, although limited guidance and advice may be provided
3.	A detailed debrief with Board members and an Observer identifying the candidate's perceived strengths and shortcomings as determined in the assessment process, as well as specific recommendations	Direction regarding which specific training and learning programs will meet the assessment requirements of CPSC. However, limited guidance /advice in this regard may be provided
4.	Assessment of candidates with a broad range of knowledge, training and experience. Successful candidates are provided a CPSC Accreditation Certificate. Assessment of additional candidates will continue following finalization of this report and implementation of required modifications to the methodology	University or other educational institution recognition
5.	A roster of individuals who have been accredited by CPSC as Peace Professionals, potentially as part of the CANADEM database of international experts (preliminary discussions were held some time ago). Peace Professionals are Canadian and non-Canadian and are competent to work nationally or internationally	Individuals who have chosen to work as volunteers and / or non-accredited peace workers … although no judgement is made via this process that these individuals are not providing valuable conflict prevention and conflict resolution services

2.3   Description - CPSC Accreditation Assessment Process

CPSC's Accreditation Assessment project uses a competency-based approach. Development of the set of Core Values and Key Competencies listed below is based largely on a review of

available literature and the input and experience of seasoned experts in the field. Two CPSC conferences, including one involving Johan Galtung, have inspired and informed the work presented here.

The approach begins with the assessment of potential candidates against Core Values as an entry qualification. Seasoned peace and conflict professionals agree that while Key Competencies can be learned, Core Values need to be in place from the start. Consequently, if the Core Values identified below are not considered to be sufficiently strong in the initial assessment phase, candidates are not invited to continue the assessment process.

It is recognized that effective leadership is also a significant element of successful performance in the practice of peace work, as it is in many other fields of endeavour. It has not been included as a separate Key Competency because it is felt that it touches each of the competencies identified below. Leadership can, of course, be defined in a number of different ways. When we use the term here, we mean the ability to persevere, build relationships, empower others, organize one-self and others well, demonstrate good judgment and enthusiasm, and above all, act in an ethical and respectful manner.

Core Values currently assessed as part of the CPSC methodology are:

- Empathy
- Humility
- Integrity

- Personal maturity

- Sincerity
- Sound judgment
- Strong desire for social justice and peace for all
- Willingness to learn

Key Competencies identified as essential to professional peace work are:

- Advanced Communication Skills
- Conciliation
- Conflict Analysis and Transformation
- Facilitation
- Mediation
- Negotiation

- Operational Planning
- Peace Building
- Human Security
- Strategic Thinking
- Teamwork

The assessment process is summarized as follows:

Step	Title
1	Expression of Interest
2	Request for References
3	Core Values Self-Assessment
4	Core Values Assessment by References
5	Board Evaluation and Decision re: Core Values Interview

6	Core Values Interview
7	Key Competencies Self-Assessment and References Assessment
8	Board Evaluation and Decision re: Key Competencies Interview
9	Key Competencies Interview
10	Final Board Assessment and Decision

> ***Note:*** *The Assessment methodology identified above is supported by a series of "tools" (forms or documents). The full set of tools is too extensive to include here; however, samples are provided in the description of each step below.*

Step 1 - Expression of Interest:

Presentations regarding the Accreditation process have been taking place for several years. As a result, CPSC currently has a list of potential peace professional candidates, i.e, expressions of interest with resumes of people who wish to be assessed.

Step 2 - Acceptance Letter and References Request:

Applicants whose "expressions of interest" and resumes demonstrate that they have a solid combination of pertinent knowledge, experience and expertise in the relevant disciplines are sent letters of acceptance. These outline the objectives and nature of the project, briefly describe the assessment process, identify our expectations regarding candidate responsibilities, and request three references who have agreed to participate in the assessment.

Step 3 – Written Self-Evaluation for Core Values:

The candidate completes a self-assessment questionnaire that includes descriptions of, and two questions about, each of the eight Core Values – one question is general in nature, the other asks them to briefly describe a situation where their demonstration of the relevant Core Value made a positive difference. Because these Core Values are exhibited in many life situations, candidates may refer to issues that are either professional or personal in nature. Their responses are treated in strictest confidence and will not be shared outside the Assessment Board.

*Note: CPSC considers each of these Core Values to be of equal importance; they are listed in the questionnaire in alphabetical order for the sake of convenience.

Please find below the sample question from the self-assessment tool for the Core Value "Empathy".

Sample – Core Value Self-Assessment Tool

CORE VALUE: Empathy
"I work to understand the depth and breadth of feeling of the various parties in a conflict in order to take everyone's interests into consideration before acting."

Question 1: To what extent is empathy a requisite characteristic for a person working in conflict?

Question 2: Briefly describe a situation in which you feel that your own empathy helped resolve a conflict.

Step 4 – Assessments from References:

References are sent a form which essentially mirrors the form sent to the candidate. Below is an example for "empathy".

Sample – Core Values – Guide for References Assessment Tool

CORE VALUE: Empathy
"I work to understand the depth and breadth of feeling of the various parties in a conflict in order to take everyone's interests into consideration before acting."

Question 1: In the course of your experience with the candidate, has he or she demonstrated empathy?
Yes __ No _ Unable to Answer __

Question 2: Briefly describe an example of when and how the candidate demonstrated this trait.

Step 5 – Board Initial Evaluation / Assessment – Core Values:

The Assessment Board consists of three highly knowledgeable and experienced individuals in a variety of related fields, one of which must be conflict resolution or "peace work". Other disciplines could include international development, diplomacy at senior levels, academia (in relevant fields), competency-based assessment, etc.

Board members must have credibility in their field and be skilled at assessing the values and competencies of others, in part through effective interviewing. The objective is to reach consensus as a Board regarding whether a candidate, based upon his/her self-assessment and the input of the three references, has adequately demonstrated each of the Core Values in their life and practice. If they do, candidates will be asked to attend an interview to follow up on any

questions or concerns that have come up during the preliminary assessment performed via the self-assessment and reference review. If they have not adequately demonstrated the Core Values set, they will be informed of this in writing and given an opportunity for a debrief.

At issue is not whether candidates have "faulty" or "deficient" values, but rather whether, in the view of this Board, and from the perspective of this Assessment process, their particular value set is considered appropriate for the kinds of work being contemplated for peace professionals. A wide range of other meaningful tasks and activities in the peace field remain open to this individual, just as experienced project managers can work in their field without official accreditation as Project Management Professionals (PMP).

Step 6 – Oral Interview – Core Values:

Most of the questions to be addressed during the oral interview will emanate from the Board's review of the core values self-assessment and the comments and observations of the references. This is a time to exchange views, to explore commonality of understanding, as well as differences, and to confirm or dismiss previous views of a candidate's demonstration of core values. CPSC has also prepared a set of potential questions for Assessment Board members. For example:

Sample – Core Values – Interview Guide for Board Members
(used as and if required)

CORE VALUE: Empathy
"I work to understand the depth and breadth of feeling of the various parties to a conflict in order to take everyone's interests into consideration before acting."

Question: Please describe an event or a situation in your past when it was particularly important for you to consider the interests of others before acting? Why was this consideration important? Do you think your consideration of those interests made any difference in the way the situation unfolded?

Before the values (and later the competencies) interview, candidates are given ½ hour to review their original self-assessment responses and informed that the interview is as informal as possible, i.e., a discussion among colleagues (while cognizant that it remains an assessment process). The Assessment Board later meets to determine whether the candidate should proceed to the Key Competencies stage. If this is not the case, they will be informed in writing and offered an oral debrief.

Step 7 – Key Competencies Self-Assessment and Reference Information Request:

Successful candidates rate their Key Competencies (as described by CPSC) by placing a check mark in the appropriate column of a self-assessment questionnaire, using the scale provided below. They add information about related formal training and a brief description of a real situation in which they feel they have demonstrated that competency. The situation described must be professional.

Levels of Competency

Level 0: I have little or no training or application experience in the competency, although I am aware of its underlying principles.
Level 1: I have knowledge and some practical training in the competency, but little or no practical experience in applying or implementing it in an operational setting.
Level 2: I have knowledge, practical training and some field experience using the competency.
Level 3: I have knowledge, practical training and extensive field experience in the competency. I am able to coach and support others in the competency.

The candidate is asked for brief information on learning, training and concrete experience related to each Key Competency. In the original CPSC methodology, the candidate was asked to fill in the tabulated form, shown below for "Conflict Analysis and Transformation", while a slightly modified version was sent to the candidate's references. This tabular approach was changed during the CPSC pilot phase. Specific reasons for, and nature of, the changes are provided in the analysis and conclusions section of this report. Briefly, the Board found that the tabular approach did not provide sufficient information to support either the assessment or the formulation of questions for a meaningful interview; therefore, candidates are now asked for a more detailed response outlining the specific nature of their experience(s), how exactly they applied the competency under the circumstances, and what difference it made that they in fact were able to demonstrate this competency**.**

Sample of rejected tabulated Key Competency Self-Assessment Table (in this case pertaining to Conflict Analysis and Transformation)						
Key Competency	**My Level**				**Formal Training (if any)**	**Specific Experience (if any)**
	0	**1**	**2**	**3**		
Conflict Analysis and Transformation: The exemplary performer uses all available tools and input to determine the evident and underlying						

elements of a conflict so as to work toward peaceful resolution. These elements include past and present issues that fuel the conflict, as well as the role and use of power by various parties. The exemplary performer also facilitates moving beyond the conflict and transforming it into another form, such as opportunity for joint discovery or benefit.					

Step 8 – Board Initial Assessment – Key Competencies:

Again, the candidate is informed in writing if their self assessment does not meet the Board's requirements, and given an opportunity to meet with a Board member for a debriefing. Successful candidates are invited for an oral interview to probe deeper into how the candidate's experience demonstrates each Key Competency being assessed.

Step 9 – Oral Interview – Key Competencies:

In addition to the questions and/or concerns deriving from the self-assessment and the observations of references, Board members are provided a set of "Enabling Behaviours" for each competency (see sample below), and a question which can be used, in whole or in part.

Sample Key Competency Interview Support Information for Board Members

KEY COMPETENCY: Conflict Analysis and Transformation
"The exemplary performer …." (Same as above in the Table in Step 7)

Enabling Behaviours:
- Maintains awareness of, and familiarity with, current tools and methodologies available to facilitate a thorough understanding of the nature and causes of conflict;
- Conducts research from all available sources to ensure that relevant information is taken into account;
- Consults with key stakeholders to build a shared understanding of the essential elements of the conflict;
- Verifies this understanding through relations with people on the ground who are living the conflict;
- Continually updates intelligence to ensure a timely understanding and identify new

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developments;

- Facilitates exploration of innovative alternatives of benefit to all for consideration of affected parties. Facilitates examination of these potential solutions.

Question: Please describe the tools and techniques you have found to be most effective in uncovering underlying elements of a conflict that are not initially expressed (or even recognized) by the parties? How do you take this understanding and use it to reframe the issues and develop a process to facilitate moving "beyond the conflict" to joint discovery and mutual benefit.

Step 10 – Results Notification:

Unsuccessful candidates are informed of Board decisions in writing, with an offer of an oral debrief meeting. Successful candidates are accredited as Peace Professionals.

Notes:

- Questions on all assessment tools are keyed closely to CPSC's Statement of Core Values and Key Competencies. The use of various tools allows the Board to review input from the candidate, his or her references, and direct questioning around the same Values and Competencies;
- The composition of the Assessment Board will demonstrate to all that those responsible for assessing candidates have significant field experience and/or significant experience in assessment techniques and interpersonal skills.

2.4   Potential Impact / Benefits

The actual impact or outcomes of an initiative such as the professionalization of peace workers obviously remains to be seen. However, the United Nations and other organizations, including members of the Canadian parliament, have expressed the need for additional professional civilian capacity related to conflict prevention and conflict resolution. The need is clear, as are the potential benefits of having someone professionally versed in theories, methods, and practices of alternatives to violent resolution of conflict present at the table when politicians and the military are debating what action to take related to current and potential conflicts. We sincerely believe major conflict, even wars, might be avoided if peace professionals are part of these discussions. Likewise, active conflicts can be brought to a satisfactory, peaceful end more readily with the participation of individuals who are experts in achieving these outcomes.

Some other long-term benefits of the CPSC Peace Professional Accreditation Project are:

- Enhanced effectiveness of peace workers;
- Reduction in unintended harm caused by well-meaning, unaccredited peace workers;

- Increased credibility of peace professionals leading to an increase in higher level input into national and international discussions.

Subject to acquisition of funding, some short-term benefits of this project would be:

- 40 – 60 peace professional candidates assessed over the next two year period (even hundreds over several years);
- Further testing, updating, and validating of the CPSC Assessment and Accreditation process and criteria, and increased standardization of the methodology;
- Links with training and peace organizations formalized and a database established to link values and competencies to training and experience opportunities.

3.0   FINDINGS ANALYSIS

3.1   Summary Assessment

The Accreditation Assessment methodology was found, through the conduct of this pilot process, to be fundamentally sound. This includes an overall sense that the Core Values and Key Competencies a) are generally consistent with what peace experts have found to be required of professional practitioners in the field, and b) offer an excellent base for an effective methodology to assess the professionalism of candidates in the conflict prevention and resolution field.

Having said this, there were also a number of areas in which it was felt improvements to the model and the methodology could be made. These will be examined in the following sections, in part through an examination of issues and concerns encountered during the pilot.

3.2   Issues / Concerns – Pilot Process and Accreditation Model

The following table documents the issues / concerns that were raised during the course of the pilot accreditation process and offers a preliminary sense as to how they might be addressed. However, it is important to note that these thoughts are provided only to begin the discussion, not in any way to influence the outcome of such discussions.

	Issue / Concern	Potential or Proposed Resolution
1.	Written feedback from references is difficult, if not impossible, to get, i.e., form completion. When received, it was found to be very valuable	References should always have the option of speaking to, or meeting with, at least one of the assessors. This was corrected during the pilot. There is an obvious advantage to having two assessors present each time. Further discussion should also take place around current reference

		questions—is there a way to tighten the questions in order to avoid incomplete forms or repetitious answers?
2.	One reference objected very strongly to assessing a candidate's values – she felt it could not be done with confidence / competence	Discuss this further with this individual to search for resolution. The process applied appeared to work well, although some issues did surface, e.g., difficulty knowing for sure how a candidate would react to a situation in "real life"
3.	Is there a need to add a "scenario" resolution component to the methodology, e.g., to account for a candidate who might not do well in one of the other components of the triangulation model (e.g., self-assessment, references and interview)	Several options present themselves here: 1. Ask each candidate to comment on specific scenarios, 2. Have several candidates discuss one scenario while being observed, 3. Have candidates each develop a project proposal, then have them agree on just one of these projects to propose to the Board, 4. Others
4.	Should assessment results require a numerical scoring or rating of a candidate's consistency with or level of achievement related to specific values and competencies being assessed? Although Board members generally agreed on "results" or outcomes, perhaps it would add an element of conclusiveness if they were required to arrive at a numerical rating. In fact, might doing so alter the outcome in some cases? Related to this, should there be a "weighting system" for each component, e.g., self-assessment, references and interview, as well as for each of the values and competencies, to add more "science" to the process and determination of outcomes? Or should the weighting establish the relative importance of the CV, self-assessment, references, and interview as they relate to the competencies?	Discuss this further as a Board and Accreditation Committee, as well as with experts in the field. At a minimum, at this point, the need to weight the different components appears to be clear, e.g., how many points out of 10 would be assigned as a weighting factor to the CV, the Core Values and the Key Competencies, and within the values and competencies categories, how much to the self-assessment, the references and the interview. This can in fact alter the results in specific cases
5.	Personal Maturity – the definition needs to be reviewed – it was felt to be lacking / inadequate	Review the issues that were raised and make whatever changes are required
6.	Verbal Communications – should this be a third component of what it takes to be a professional in this field? In other words, if a candidate clearly has the values determined to be necessary for peace	Discuss this further within the Accreditation Committee and beyond. One solution is to make it a third "critical" category or component, i.e., along with values and competencies. Another is to

	professionalism and, according to both a self-assessment and reference reports has the required competencies, should the fact that they have difficulty verbally expressing what they know and practice prevent them from consideration as a Peace Professional?	assess communications capabilities as part of each value and competency, as is currently being done
7.	The form for candidate self-assessment for Key Competencies (i.e., that the candidate receives) is now out of synch with the version that is in the "manual" we distributed. This must be corrected. The reason this is the case is that in past interviews the Board was not given sufficient information upon which to base meaningful questions, i.e., specific to the candidate's skills / competencies. The "new" version of the self-assessment is significantly more onerous upon the candidate, but provides the Board with much more information	Changes have already been made to alleviate the difficulties encountered. Either these changes should be "ratified" or an alternative approach should be devised
8.	Difficulty getting a quorum of Board members and others involved in the process together for meetings and interviews	Have more than 3 Board Members and at least two observers available for each assessment "team" so, if one or two are unavailable, others can step in, allowing the process to proceed in a timely manner
9.	Thorough documentation of the process proved difficult, even scattered	Implement more rigour to the follow-up process in regard to documentation of each step. Also clarify expectations in terms of format for each stage. To this end, creating structured interview sheets would also ensure consistent information is captured and documented each time
10.	The "set" of values and competencies needs to be reviewed, as do the definitions of each. Questions were raised during the pilot process that need to be addressed	Establish a committee to undertake this review and report back with suggestions within approximately 1 month
11.	The full process takes significant commitment, time and effort from all concerned, i.e., the candidate, references, Board members, Observer and secretariat. Are there ways to reduce this without jeopardizing the effectiveness of the process?	The degree of rigour and thoroughness of the process is a unique strength and also a potential problem. As options are explored, as identified above, the balance between these two must be kept in mind

4.0   CONCLUSIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

The above issues and concerns lead directly to the following conclusions and recommendations:

1) **Modify the manner in which information is requested from references:** a) Meet with the professional reference who objected to the assessment of values, consider his / her views / arguments and make modifications to the methodology if required; b) Modify the documentation to be consistent with changes in methodology made during the pilot phase related to offering references the option of a face to face meeting (where possible), a telephone interview, or a written assessment.

2) **Consider the use of prescribed scenarios, or variations on this theme, to illicit "real-life" responses from candidates to a greater degree than the current methodology allows for:** One of the possible "weaknesses" of the current methodology is that there are no observed real-life professional interactions of candidates with other professionals or other candidates. While references can and do provide this perspective, such assessments also have shortcomings. There are several approaches to the use of scenarios. One such approach could involve asking each of five candidates to develop and present to the Assessment Board a project plan / approach for addressing a particular issue. This would be followed up by having all five candidates discuss the issue in question, and reduce the project plans / approaches from five to three, and ultimately to one. The Assessment Board and an Observer would observe all candidates during this process and take copious notes for subsequent assessment of behaviour in situ. Other approaches to eliciting real-life responses from candidates should also be considered.

3) **Add additional structure, perhaps a numerical scoring system, to the assessment of each candidate's responses throughout the process. This might also include a weighting system for the Values and Competencies components and then for each value and competency within these two components:** As mentioned above, a structure of this kind could assign weights, for example, to the CV and then to each of the Values and Competencies categories. This should be considered, but may add an unnecessary level of complexity since the methodology is currently structured such that any candidate who does not meet the required standard in regard to Values is not considered any further in the process, in which case the weighting would be redundant. Within a structure of this kind, it would be appropriate to assign a minimum acceptable score to some of the values and competencies, e.g., 4 points out of a possible 10. One additional possibility was to include the debriefing between the Board and the candidate in the ultimate assessment. In other words, assess the candidate's reaction to the results of the Values and Competencies assessment as an integral part of the final assessment. This would, in some cases, provide a "real-life" view of how a candidate deals with such a stressful situation.

4) **Undertake a review of the current Core Values and Key Competencies set, as well as the definitions of each:** The definition of Personal Maturity has been raised as one area requiring review. Others have also been discussed. Consider whether Communications capabilities should be a separate category, i.e., equivalent to Values and Competencies, here as well. One of the aims of the review will be to build into the process the means to determine the appropriateness of candidates' competencies in cross-cultural and international environments. Another will be to begin to frame different settings in which successful candidates might apply themselves; this element could lead to identifying specializations in which candidates might be certified for certain areas of work and not for others, similar to medical and other professionals where categories and specializations are recognized.

5) **Conduct a thorough review of all methodology documentation to bring it into alignment with changes made during the pilot phase:** Changes have been made during the pilot to address emerging issues / concerns that could not wait for completion of the pilot.

6) **Construct Assessment Boards in teams such that there will always be at least 4 potential Board members and 2 observers to draw upon, i.e., in order to put together a 3 person Board with one Observer:** It was at times difficult during the pilot to get the Board, Observer, and candidate together for required meetings and interviews. To make things work efficiently, we need at least one backup for Board members and one for the Observer.

7) **Consider introducing a fee for the Accreditation service:** Introducing some kind of fee for the Accreditation service would help promote the value of the process being offered.

8) **Discuss promoting the Accreditation Process as a self-finding tool for those not yet experienced in the peace field:** Invite applicants who may not yet have in-depth peace work experience but who would like to become prepared for this kind of work. The Accreditation Process may be a valuable tool for allowing these individuals to reflect upon whether they would like a peacebuilding career and to discover what they may be missing to be effective in the field.

9) **Establish an Accreditation Process Secretariat to support the Board in its work and to monitor development of required reports and documentation:** This secretariat function might be volunteer or a part-time paid position, but it is critical to the success of this initiative. The secretariat would support the Board in preparing reports and, where possible, would prepare the actual supporting documents (such as structured interview sheets to capture consistent information for final summary reports). It would also keep the records in one place for reference as required.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Key Messages Re: CPSC Accreditation Model

- *Civilian Peace Service Canada (CPSC)* has recently piloted a program which is accrediting civilian *Peace Professionals*, based upon an assessment of *Core Values and Key Competencies*.
- Like doctors, lawyers, engineers and soldiers, peace workers need to be assessed and accredited for competence and professionalism.
- Although thousands of organizations are doing excellent work in training and research for viable alternatives to military responses to conflict, CPSC is the first (in the world, to our knowledge) to develop a standardized methodology for accrediting *peace professionals*.
- This methodology needs to be further tested and, as required, refined for global application (Note: Preliminary expressions of interest outside Canada have been received).
- Standardized assessment and testing for peace work has broader application than just accreditation, e.g., curriculum development, guidance to students seeking a career in peace work, etc.
- Peace Professionals must be included in decision making regarding conflict prevention and / or transformation at national and international levels.
- CPSC is an integral part of a Private Member's Bill for a comprehensive architecture of peace for Canada, focused on creating a minister and department of peace where, amongst others, CPSC-accredited Peace Professionals would function to implement the initiatives in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Attachment 2: Assessing Values for Peace Service Professionals – CPSC Approach

The assessment of values is difficult based on two considerations. For one, it is difficult to "look into a person", that is to be able to identify motivating forces within an individual. Those characteristics are often not even clear to its holder. In addition, a suitable formulation of such values by an outsider is prone to be interpreted according to the "web of meaning" of the person conducting the assessment.

The natural tendency would be not to engage in value assessment. Clearly, we cannot afford this because peace service professionals affect the lives of others. We need to create awareness among peace service professionals that certain dispositions tend to work best in doing peace service work.

The identified values must not be confused with imposing a situated morality (that is often culturally defined) upon peace service professionals. Rather, those values result from a reflection of the complexity of human beings. Human beings are will endowed, as well as impacted, by a number of influences upon which an individual has limited control. Such influences are, for example, one's language, one's upbringing, values that are shared within one's social context, the organization of addressing the needs of the body, one's environment and one's spiritual orientation. Those influences can be assessed by our self-conscious mind and are able to pre-program us. Still, the fact remains that we are inclined to hold a certain set of values, habits and customs, a "web of meaning". This "web of meaning" is a human condition and cannot be separated from being.

This ontological consideration explains the tendency of people to develop different world views. The principles of such world views (that are often shared with others in the context of culture) tend to be perceived as preferable, if not absolute, not only for its holders but for others as well. Conflict arises when two incompatible perceptions confront each other and the natural tendency is to combat the other as an enemy that is a threat to one's integrity.

Peace service professionals need to be aware of the ascribed basic human condition and its natural tendencies in order to be able to facilitate peaceful co-existence of people holding diverse world views. The assessment of CPS values is intended to enforce an attitude among peace service professionals that is based on an understanding and on respecting diversity as a desirable fact for humanity.

The values are also an expression of respecting the human dignity of each person. Respect for human dignity requires a commitment to create individual, social, environmental and spiritual conditions that are necessary for people to flourish, albeit in very different ways.

Peace service professionals are prone to follow natural tendencies like everyone else. However, in their special role as facilitator of peace they need to have internalized a world view that allows them to take on a *meta* perspective on themselves and others.

Values tend to be the expression of world views. Through assessing values that tend to be held by individuals capable of this *meta* perspective we can also then raise an awareness of the goals of peace service work. Through peace service work a tool kit (those would be the competencies) can be offered that can help people to live with dignity. Assessing values thus becomes also a tool to create awareness of the issues that need to be considered in peace service work and in peace service training / education.

Erich Schelhammer, 2009