

**THE UNITED NATIONS CULTURE OF PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE PROGRAM
IN CANADA: A Report to the United Nations Secretary General pursuant to General
Assembly Resolution A/RES/58/11 paragraph 12 <http://www.peace.ca/UNa55r047.pdf>
(i.e. the Mid Term Report of the Decade of a Culture of Peace)**

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“The General Assembly ...

12. *Invites* civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to provide information to the Secretary-General on the observance of the Decade and the activities undertaken to promote a culture of peace and non-violence;”

Canada is not at peace. We may be relatively well off. Historically, Canada has been better than some, and not as good as others. But we are in a state of denial about our actions and contributions to war and violence, at home and abroad. We try to avoid conflict. However, to quote, “We may not be interested in war, but war is interested in us.”

The vast majority of Canadians have little or no knowledge of the Culture of Peace and Non-violence Program and Decade. The vast majority of politicians and officials in the Canadian Government have little or no knowledge of the Culture of Peace and Non-violence Program. Little, if any, new resources (financial, informational or human) have been provided to build a Culture of Peace and Non-violence. This is ample evidence that the Government of Canada has not rushed in to participate. Furthermore, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO does not see its role as one of leadership.

In short, despite what some may say, we are underachieving our potential to build a Culture of Peace and Non-violence in Canada, and in the world. A major reason for this lack of development is that there has been a lack of motivation and action. To those leaders who proclaim an interest in peace, the challenge as they say in the movies is, “Show me the money.” It is not there in any significant way. And so, it will be up to civil society to motivate our leaders to build a Culture of Peace. For those leaders who resist change, and have a vested interest maintaining the status quo, civil society must convey that the status quo is no longer acceptable. For those leaders who do not wish to lose their perceived ‘right’ to go to war, civil society must take away those pretenses. Canada and mankind can not wait any longer for our Governments to respond – people are suffering now, due to violence of all sorts, and the looming specters of nuclear holocaust, weapons of mass destruction, and environmental destruction is unacceptable and unjustifiable.

From our personal experience, we had difficulty getting the information that we needed to do something to contribute to a Culture of Peace. So we created our own: Canadian Centres for Teaching Peace, a virtual centre at <http://www.peace.ca>

- Since incorporation in 1998, we have had over 1,000,000 visitors to the site,
- We are currently **averaging over 50,000 visitors per month**, from around the world,
- We are the best (most active) peace web site in Canada and one of the best in the world (in plain language, suitable for all readers),
- We host National and several Provincial Peace Education Conferences annually,

- We host several email listservers, to provide tools for communication, networking, dialogue and information dissemination.

The bottom line is that there is a lot of opportunity for improvement in building a Culture of Peace and Non-violence in Canada – a lot of opportunity for us all to make a difference.

A *raison d'être* for the Culture of Peace Program (identified by the U.N. program) is "to build peace in Canada by working to change behaviours, forge values, and incite the institutional transformations that are indispensable for eliminating the deep roots of violence, exclusion and conflict."

What we found in Canada was an information void, a leadership void, a resource void, and an educational void. Our civil society goal has been to help fill these gaps.

Our sense is that Canadians (inside and outside of government) want a Culture of Peace and Non-violence, however they do not know what they can practically do to develop on that path. Our civil society goal is to help raise this awareness and understanding. We have a Canadian Peace Education Strategy with a short-term goal to get peace education on the Canadian agenda, and a longer term goal to get peace education integrated into all curricula by the end of the decade.

You will be pleased to know that in November 2004 we have successfully completed 9 days of intensive peace conferencing at McMaster University in Hamilton, involving some excellent minds, and we are happy to tell you that our deliberations have given birth to a 'Canadian Culture of Peace Program' ("CCOPP") - a new formal institution (Note 1) with **the mission to advance a Culture of Peace and Non-violence, at home and abroad**. We have a larger core group of people to carry on this important work, and a wonderful list of tasks to commence work on. We will also enlarge our community of support and engagement through inviting the participation of all Canadians, individuals and organizations, who wish to share our mission, and follow the values of the U.N. Culture of Peace Program. You can read about these developments, which form a part of this report, at the temporary web site at <http://www.peace.ca/canadiancultureofpeaceprogram.htm> .

To meet these important goals, Canadians have a lot on our Culture of Peace Agenda:

A significant item is the design paper for the CCOPP Stakeholder Web/Network concept (including CCOPP governance issues), which a smaller working group has been collaboratively developing over the past month (reference <http://www.peace.ca/StakeholderWebDesign.doc>). A Stakeholder Web/Network/Organization, as it has been described at various times, is a network of stakeholders that scrutinizes and attempts to influence Canada's behaviour with respect to peace and violence. The United Nations Culture of Peace Program tells us that we need to transform all institutions from a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace. Stakeholder webs are a powerful force for transformation. They actively investigate, evaluate, and seek to change the behaviors of institutions (such as corporations, governments, educational institutions, religious organizations, NGOs, etc.) to achieve better alignment with the values and interests of their participants – in this case, a Culture of Peace. Our role is one of catalyst and facilitator. The Internet gives us the tools to build the Culture of Peace Stakeholder Web. Discussion of this design will also help provide input for the (very important) Marketing

Strategy (i.e. How to 'Sell' the Culture of Peace Program), and a Canadian Culture of Peace Program Handbook with a significant section on Leadership for Peace.

Significant discussion will also be required and planned with respect to:

- a) a) The projected relationship with the Canadian government (including Department of Peace Initiatives),
- b) b) Preparations for at least 3 annual national conferences (the Second Peace and Leadership Workshop, the Second Canadian Culture Of Peace Program Conference, the Fourth National Peace Education Conference), and provincial Peace Education Conferences,
- c) c) Development of the Canadian Culture of Peace News Network,
- d) d) Development of the new Peace and Governance Program at the University of Alberta, with a specialty in the Culture of Peace and Non-violence Program,
- e) e) research on the needs and issues related to "Educating Peace Educators" (i.e. peace pedagogy to guide the establishment of a University program to teach teachers and other potential peace educators how to teach peace),
- f) f) Preparation to initiate "crucial conversations" with leadership of key institutions in Canada to seek transformation as follows: government, business, media, religion, education. (We will need to refine our protocols to hold successful, difficult, crucial conversations.) We should also be preparing to initiate case studies conducting 7 Crucial Canadian Conversations to build better key relationships as follows:
 1. 1. the Canada/United States relationship,
 2. 2. the Canada/United Nations relationship,
 3. 3. the Anglophone/Francophone relationship in Canada,
 4. 4. the male/female relationship in Canada,
 5. 5. the aboriginal/non-aboriginal relationship in Canada,
 6. 6. the business/community relationship in Canada,
 7. 7. the military/foreign affairs/community relationship in Canada.

Our government is not yet doing this, and so we must. In the process, Canadians have developed some significant expertise in peacebuilding, peace education and leadership. We are pleased to offer these services to others.

In conclusion, Canadians must no longer take inaction and resource deprivation towards the Culture of Peace and Non-violence Program for granted. At Riverside Church in 1967, Martin Luther King, Jr. opened his famous speech that linked poverty, racism and the Vietnam War with, "I come to this house of worship tonight because my conscience leaves me no other choice." The ultimate challenge for Canadians is to stir that same spirit throughout Canada and the world to build a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World. The challenge for our leaders will be to rise to the occasion – and we must help them see that.

Note 1 - " 'institution' ... tucked away among the many historical meanings is: "something that enlarges and liberates" ... An institution is a gathering of persons who have accepted a common purpose, and a common discipline to guide the pursuit of that purpose, to the end that each involved person reaches higher fulfillment as a person, through serving and being served by the common venture, than would be achieved alone or in a less committed relationship." Robert K. Greenleaf, in his book "Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness" (ref. <http://www.peace.ca/servantleadership.htm>)

