

# LET'S TALK

MARCH 2007 VOLUME 31, NO. 3

## Safe Transition of Offenders into the Community

THE CORRECTIONAL PROCESS  
FROM START TO FINISH

**MAINTAINING THE TIES**

PARTNERSHIPS AND  
EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT  
REINTEGRATION



Correctional Service  
Canada

Service correctionnel  
Canada

Canada

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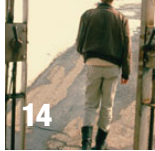
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The safe transition of offenders into the community involves close cooperation between the Correctional Service of Canada and its criminal justice partners and community members and organizations.

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## FEATURES

# Correctional Experts in Afghanistan

BY **Suzanne Leclerc**, Senior Media Relations Officer, Communications and Citizen Engagement Sector

Photo: Jean-Marc Carisse

As part of the Government of Canada's commitment to help Afghanistan become stable and self-sufficient, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) is playing a key role in an important prison reconstruction team project in Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.

On February 2, 2007, Linda Garwood-Filbert, Unit Manager, Stony Mountain Institution and Ric Fecteau, Correctional Supervisor, Edmonton Institution, headed for Afghanistan on a one-year assignment as members of Canada's Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). They will provide training and mentoring to staff and prison administrators at Sarpoza Provincial Prison in Kandahar.

Linda and Ric will assist the Afghan Central Prison Department in developing a national prison administration that is responsive to the rule of law and whose operations and practices respect international standards. The project is wholly funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's (DFAIT) Global Peace and Security Fund. Linda and Ric will work closely with PRT colleagues from that department, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the Department of National Defence.

This is not a new commitment for CSC. The Service has been present in Afghanistan since 2002 through deployments to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) and has provided culturally relevant advice on everything from prison reconstruction to the creation of policy and practices, staff training, gender issues, and offender programming.

In August 2006, Rick Reiman, Area Director, Winnipeg Parole, was seconded to UNAMA for this purpose.

CSC is making an extremely valuable contribution not only to nation-building efforts in Afghanistan, but also other international correctional missions. "Few Canadians know about the excellent work done by CSC around the world bringing stability to the correctional systems of war-torn countries," commented CSC Commissioner Keith Coulter. "Contributing to the establishment of a sound correctional system that respects international standards of human rights and the rule of law is vital to the development and stability of any civil society."

CSC has been involved since 2001 in Afghanistan issues with partners in justice sector departments under the strategic direction of DFAIT. The Service undertook pioneering work in Kosovo and developed and managed CSC's contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Côte d'Ivoire. The Service also maintains individual relationships with other nations and international corrections organizations.

We can be very proud that these professionals have volunteered to help the people of Afghanistan rebuild their country after years of turmoil and upheaval.

For more information on Afghanistan and CSC's other international engagements, please go to the International link at [www.csc-scc.gc.ca](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca). To read a personal account of one CSC employee's recent contribution and experience in Afghanistan, go to *From Kabul to Kandahar* on page 16 in this issue. ♦



Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety Canada, Linda Garwood-Filbert, Ric Fecteau and Commissioner Keith Coulter on the eve of the team's departure to Kandahar, Afghanistan.

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## COMMISSIONER'S EDITORIAL

# Safe Transition of Offenders into the Community

Before I turn to the focus of this issue of *Let's Talk* — safe transition of offenders into the community — I want to mention how proud I am that we have CSC employees working in Afghanistan, helping to build a secure and democratic society. As you see in the article opposite, Linda Garwood-Filbert and Ric Fecteau had the opportunity to meet with Public Safety Canada Minister Stockwell Day the day before they left. Minister Day thanked them for their willingness to contribute to Canada's efforts in Afghanistan, and wished them every success in the coming months.

Linda and Ric have serious work before them, but I am confident that they are up to their task. Through dedicated employees like Linda and Ric, we are making a real contribution to bringing stability to the correctional systems of war-torn countries. In this magazine, you will also read about CSC employee Thérèse LeBlanc's successful mission to Afghanistan last summer. Her work laid the groundwork for Linda and Ric's current deployment.

Readers of *Let's Talk* learned about CSC's strategic priorities in past issues, and heard about CSC employees in all parts of the country who are making a public safety contribution. We chose these priorities to guide our efforts in delivering the best possible public safety results, while responding to the changing offender population profile, and the Government's tackling crime agenda. This year, we will continue to focus on these same priorities in order to maximize our contribution to public safety.

This issue of *Let's Talk* focuses on a priority that affects all aspects of our work: safe transition of offenders into the community. This is because CSC's efforts in this regard begin when offenders come through the



doors for assessment, and continue through their re-entry into the community.

The articles focus on how CSC supports offenders' successful reintegration with the help of a host of people and programs — including chaplains, parole officers, volunteers and others who help offenders prepare for release, and Circles of Support and Accountability and others who support them after release. You will also read about the important role a family can play in a successful conditional release, and the role of other partners who support successful reintegration of offenders into the community, including law enforcement agencies and community partners.

Our strategic priority to improve our capacities to address mental health needs of offenders will be the focus of the next edition of *Let's Talk*.

Keith Coulter  
Commissioner  
Correctional Service of Canada

# The Correctional Process from Start to Finish

BY **Djamila Amellal, Ph. D.**, Communications Officer,  
Communications and Citizen Engagement Sector

The correctional process begins when the judge hands down a sentence. The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) under the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA) oversees an offender's correctional process through several stages until the offender's warrant expiry date.

To administer the judge's sentence and fully prepare the inmate for returning to the community, the CCRA requires CSC to carry out an extensive assessment of the case as soon as possible. Based on this assessment, CSC establishes a detailed correctional plan to help the inmate address his or her criminogenic factors.

The inmate will first be admitted to an assessment unit in a regional reception centre, which is part of a larger correctional institution. CSC has seven such units: three located in the Prairie Region and one in each other region. On average, the inmate remains at the reception centre between 70 and 90 days while correctional staff members collect all necessary information from various sources. This includes information provided by the court or relating to prior offences at the provincial level, or related to family, education, employment and other factors.

At the end of the assessment period, correctional staff put in place a correctional plan based on the inmate's identified criminogenic

factors, risks and needs. During this process, staff also determine the security classification (minimum, medium or maximum) corresponding to the risk that the inmate poses, as well as the penitentiary where the inmate will be incarcerated. The correctional plan is updated throughout the inmate's incarceration.

At the institution, a new phase of the inmate's supervision and management begins. The inmate meets the case management team (CMT), which includes the parole officer in charge of the case, correctional officers, health care professionals (such as psychologists), program officers and staff working in various institutional shops. At this point, it is imperative that the inmate commits himself or herself to the correctional plan. The CMT's main objective is to help the inmate resolve his or her criminogenic problems and, subsequently, reduce the inmate's security classification before release on parole.

As day parole or statutory release eligibility dates approach, case preparation begins in cooperation with members of the community into which the offender will be released under parole supervision. Community members often include family, friends, volunteers and members of circles of support.

The correctional process does not end with the inmate's release — it continues in the community. Just like in the institution, inmates work with a CMT that includes a parole officer, health care professionals, volunteers and an entire network of support. During this stage,

the parole officer will make use of the health care services and social services available in the community. This is another way for offenders to create ties with the community and integrate. The inmate follows the correctional plan, which is updated to indicate the inmate's progress and compliance with the conditions established by the National Parole Board (NPB). CMT intervention continues to reinforce the inmate's progress and mitigate the risk. The NPB intervenes only if an inmate commits another crime or breaches a release condition.

With the exception of lifers, who remain for their lifetime under CSC's jurisdiction whether they are incarcerated or in the community, the correctional process ends on the inmate's warrant expiry date or on expiry of a long-term supervision order, though in some cases, because of the nature of the offence, a judge may impose an order of five or eight additional years of incarceration.

Julie Keravel, Director, Institutional Reintegration Operations, Operations and Correctional Programs Sector, comments: "I continue to be amazed, even after 23 years, at the effect our staff's interventions have on public safety and on offenders' lives. In fact, 90 percent of federal offenders are admitted to CSC with previous youth or adult criminal records. One would expect that most would fail again, yet most never recidivate after conditional release or their warrant expiry date. To me, it is certain that we make a difference." ♦



Safe Transition of  
Offenders into the  
Community

Official logo of CFCN publications – “Building stronger and safer communities by assisting families affected by criminal behaviour...”

# Maintaining the Ties

## Reintegration and the Canadian Families and Corrections Network

**E**ach offender has a unique family history—some may have grown up in a string of foster homes while others may come from more stable environments. For some, family ties were broken long ago; these offenders have been rejected by both their parents and siblings because of their criminal lifestyles. Still others have proven that family bonds are unshakeable and any form of adversity only serves to make them stronger. Many offenders have created families of their own.

BY **G. Chartier**, Communications Officer,  
Communications and Citizen Engagement Sector

The prospect of incarceration for a key member can shake the family unit to its foundations. The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) recognizes this and knows that healthy family units play an important part in an offender’s rehabilitation and reintegration. Family programs such as the one at Millhaven Institution in Ontario have been established to respect and strengthen the ties that bind.

### Family-based Orientation Course at Millhaven Institution

At the Millhaven Assessment Unit (MAU), a compulsory family-based orientation course is given by Lloyd Withers of the Canadian Families and Corrections Network (CFCN). In it, he asks offenders to examine the impact their criminal behaviour has had on those closest to them and to make amends for the hurt they may have caused. Perhaps in return they will gain some strong family-based support for their eventual reintegration into society.

During his 10 years as a chaplain with CSC, Withers developed and delivered the Maintaining Positive Couple Relationships at Millhaven, Frontenac and Kingston penitentiaries. He is currently the National Coordinator of the

CFCN, a Canadian charity.

The family-based orientation course began as a two-year pilot project and is now funded on a year-by-year contract by the Ontario Regional Chaplaincy of CSC. In 2006, approximately 650 recently sentenced offenders attended the family-based orientation at the MAU.

The course involves a two-and-a-half hour lecture and discussion on making links with community organizations, faith-based groups, and community chaplaincies. The discussion focuses on the offenders’ families and the impact their crimes have had on their families, and attempts to give the offenders the means to maintain relationships in the community. The discussion also includes ways to maintain the bonds between an incarcerated father and his children, and how to normalize being a family without making criminal behavior or incarceration normal.

At the end of the orientation, Withers gives inmates a form that discusses how to write a restorative letter home saying “I’m sorry,” and how to take responsibility for what they have done. Inmates are given pen and paper and encouraged to write letters to their families.

“They call me the pen guy,” Withers jokes. He also asks inmates if they want an orientation package sent to their families, noting that families are generally appreciative of the material sent.

### Families as a Force for Good

“Reintegration begins when the judge sentences an offender,” Withers says.

According to the CFCN, the families of offenders should be recognized as assets to offenders, to the correctional system and to society because of the role they can play in successful conditional release, without compromising public safety or the security of an institution.

That view was one of the conclusions of a policy document about the needs of families affected by incarceration and reintegration. The report, based on extensive consultation in communities across the country, is entitled *A Strategic Approach and Policy Document to Address the Needs of Families of Offenders: Safety, Respect and Dignity for All*. (available on the CFCN Web site at [www3.sympatico.ca/cfcn](http://www3.sympatico.ca/cfcn))

### A Partner with CSC

“CFCN is a major voluntary sector partner,” says Reverend Christina Guest of Chaplaincy in CSC, “in the development of policy and practice, and also in the designing and piloting of resources and tools.” CFCN was established around 1993 with the additional support of CSC’s Chaplaincy Branch.

“This was perfect timing because we were trying to heighten the profile of families within CSC,” she says.

### “Every Person Comes from a Family”

Rev. Guest says that while it is true that some family members may choose to not remain in contact with an inmate, thousands of families strive to maintain ties when a family member is incarcerated.

“Every person comes from a family,” she says. “We can be talking about parents trying to support one of their adult children inside, various forms of partnered relationships, and children, often very young ones, the average age being between 7 and 8.”

Rev. Guest recalls sitting in on one of Lloyd Withers’ sessions at the MAU when an offender said that he had told his family to give up on him.

“He didn’t want to put them through all kinds of hardship and he clearly did not see a lot of hope in his future. That’s what we are trying to avoid by thinking more intentionally about CSC’s role and response vis-à-vis families,” she says.

“Because I monitor the CSC portal on families ([http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/portals/families/index\\_e.shtml](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/portals/families/index_e.shtml)) and I get inquiries all the time from family members who are attempting to maintain ties, I know how difficult that can be because of the location of our institutions and visiting hours and those sorts of things. At the same time, I have heard of families who reported back how incredibly helpful it has been to have this support as they planned for the re-entry of their family member.

“We see this as one of the many ways in which support can be offered. It is not going to work for everyone, first, because some families are not supportive, and second, because some families contribute to and participate in the values that have led people to prison. But certainly some parents and some very devoted spouses make a big difference.”

### Results from Maintaining the Ties

“The most telling result,” says Rev. Guest, “was reported by the assistant warden in charge of Correctional Programs at Millhaven Institution when Lloyd started the family-based orientation pilot. He said that there had been a measurable decline in tension and incidents at the assessment unit. The guys knew that through CFCN, their families could get access to the information needed. They had resources to assist their families and maintain the ties.”

“Clearly it affects how they’re able to cope with the beginning of their incarcerations,” says Rev. Guest. “There are huge amounts of stress and the family-based orientation program helps reduce that.” ♦

# Chaplaincy

## Comrades in Crises, Partners in Success

**C**orrectional Service of Canada (CSC) chaplains and parole officers approach corrections from different perspectives but they share the same goal: the safe and effective reintegration of offenders into the community. In their daily activities, Chaplain Leon Remus and Parole Officer Lak Sehmbi demonstrate what it takes to help these offenders succeed.

BY **Lisa Bayne**, Programs Manager,  
Vancouver Parole

Photos courtesy of Lisa Bayne

### Offering Spiritual Support

A day in the life of Chaplain Leon Remus is varied, hectic and often spent on the road. The chaplain is frequently seen flying in and out of the office en route to meetings, always offering an encouraging “Hello . . . how’s it going?” as he runs by, usually with an offender in tow. Chaplain Remus is responsible for offering spiritual support as well as various physical supports for offenders in seven institutions, the community, and ten community residential facilities. When it comes to helping offenders make positive changes in their lives, the chaplain’s day may be long but his energy and enthusiasm are boundless.

Chaplain Remus is passionate about his work because he believes that God has placed him where he is meant to be. He appreciates the support of his co-workers in community corrections, including Regional Chaplain Gerry Ayotte and other institutional chaplains.

One example of Chaplain Remus’ success is the progress he made with an offender named Cedric, who was referred to him by a psychologist. Cedric was somewhat hesitant to speak with the chaplain; however, Chaplain Remus spent a lot of time with him and was able to successfully walk him to his warrant expiry date (WED) two and a half years later. Currently, the chaplain is providing support to Cedric’s brother, who is incarcerated in one of CSC’s institutions. To help Cedric know

that he is not alone, the chaplain continues to offer support.

### A Day in the Life

Chaplain Remus’ day is never boring. Flexibility is essential because his schedule often changes by the hour. He is constantly trying to build relationships with co-workers, offenders, and community partners. In effect, he builds bridges in the community because he feels strongly that everyone is part of the community. “The healthier the individuals are in the community, the healthier that community is as a whole,” he says.

### Challenges

Chaplain Remus is well aware of the challenges facing offenders in the Pacific Region. “Many are ill-prepared to live in the community. They have lived their lives in separate communities; some are institutionalized and often they feel ostracized. Many feel the urge to go back to institutional life because it is all they have ever known. “The biggest challenge is when they stop believing in themselves,” he comments. He is there to help when offenders make the decision to change the way they approach their lives.

“We are more alike than different” is his personal motto when he deals with an offender’s negative behaviour. “They have a chance for positive change, and there is always hope. I am an eternal optimist, which helps me search out the good in people.”

### Supervision in Vancouver

Lak Sehmbi took an interest in risk assessment while enrolled in criminology and

# and Parole

psychology at Simon Fraser University, and later chose a field practice at New Westminster Area Parole. Eight years later, Sehmbi, now a community parole officer, continues to be a valued member of Vancouver Area Community Corrections. She loves the flexibility, creativity and innovation that go into working with offenders.

## Housing and Health

Sehmbi says that one continuing problem for offenders is Vancouver's extremely high cost of living, which results in severe shortages of affordable and appropriate housing. "I see Vancouver-based offenders with good family support and even they struggle with living expenses. People who come from other parts of Canada may not know just how costly it is until they get here."

"Managing diseases like HIV and Hepatitis C, and working with an aging population also has challenges," she says. "There are limited bed spaces for offenders at community residential facilities, and we do not have a lot of resources to help them. Also, offenders

between 60 and 64 years old find it very difficult to obtain jobs, or they are disabled but not yet able to retire. Disability pensions are also extremely difficult to obtain."

Sehmbi addresses those challenges by forming exceptional relationships with partners and non-profit societies. Also, she works closely with community police, and organizes the annual Police/Parole Workshop as well as an annual police/parole/Crown contact event. She understands that the police and other partners are a vital resource in ensuring the safe reintegration of offenders.

Sehmbi sees offenders facing other serious challenges in the community. She describes a typical cycle: "Drug use and its related instability, coupled with poor coping skills and negative associations, make it hard to succeed." She says that because offenders are often alone, they go back to what they know—drug abuse.

## A Typical Day?

"There is no such thing as a typical day in the life of a parole officer," she adds, "because

every day is different. You start with your voicemail in the morning and after that you have to intervene in situations as you see fit. We are constantly juggling our schedules to address emerging issues on our caseload."

## From Chaplaincy to Parole Supervision

Ask Chaplain Leon Remus to name his major supporters and he quickly points to his co-workers at the parole office. If you ask Lak Sehmbi the same question, she is quick to mention how support from Chaplain Remus and others is crucial for success. Community corrections staff members know that they are not alone in their work, and they value and support each others' contributions. They call upon one another in times of crisis and in times of success.

Leon Remus and Lak Sehmbi are two shining examples of how good support, structure and community partnerships can help offenders live law-abiding lifestyles and successfully reach warrant expiry, thus making the community safer for all. ♦



Chaplain Leon Remus is constantly trying to build relationships with co-workers, offenders, and community partners.



Lak Sehmbi loves the flexibility, creativity and innovation that go into working with offenders.



# A Simple Plan

**F**or many newly released inmates, the first few weeks of freedom can be the most vulnerable period for a relapse into criminal behaviour. However, with proper preparation and planning for outside realities, offenders increase their chances of succeeding. The goal of the Pre-Release Program, a pilot project in several institutions, including Kingston Penitentiary (KP), is to encourage offenders to make serious plans so they are prepared to function in normal society once they are released. Recently, a Let's Talk writer visited KP to see how a dedicated and innovative volunteer – Grant Mitchell – runs the program.

BY **Bill Rankin**, Communications Officer,  
Communications and Citizen Engagement Sector

Photo: Bill Rankin

“Hey, I understand you’re getting out soon,” says the middle-aged man in the crisp white shirt and sneakers, a clipboard under his arm.

The inmate, Robert, is a big fellow, well over six feet. He eyes the man with an expression of uncertainty, as if to say, “Who is this guy?”

The middle-aged man smiles with disarming friendliness. “Where are you from?”

“Toronto,” Robert replies in a low voice.

“Toronto, eh? I know Toronto. Spent a lot of time there myself when I was younger. Why don’t we have a seat here and we’ll chat.” He motions to a chair beside a small table in a quiet room adjacent to one of the Kingston Penitentiary (KP) ranges. Robert hesitates, then pulls the chair back and stretches his large frame over it, regarding the man with a mixture of scepticism and curiosity.

“I’m Grant Mitchell, the ‘pre-release guy,’” says the middle-aged man with a smile and holds out his hand. Robert slowly extends his heavily inked arm. Mitchell grasps the calloused mitt and shakes it warmly, then offers a business card.

“I’m a volunteer, says Mitchell, “and I’m here to help guys plan for when they get out — help them find a job, for instance.” He taps his clipboard with a pen. “I have a few questions for you, if you don’t mind. These questions will get you thinking so you can cover all the bases before you are out on the street. Have you thought about what you’re going to do when you leave here?”

“Uh, well yeah, some,” is the guarded reply.

“Great!” Mitchell exclaims. “Then bear with me if you know some of the answers already.” His eyes twinkle and he launches into a well-rehearsed delivery: a mixture of light-hearted banter, serious questions and bits of advice.



“What kind of work have you done in the past? Have your family or friends offered to help you find work?” He sounds like either a professional salesman or a radio host (he’s been both in past careers) and Robert starts to visibly relax. He tips back the peak of his baseball cap to get a better look at Mitchell and focuses on what the older man is saying. This is not lost on Mitchell. He may not have Robert’s complete confidence yet, but soon the offender will see that Mitchell is trying to help him.

### Another Chance at Life

And there is a good possibility that Robert will need help. Within the next 10 weeks he will be released from KP after being incarcerated — his time and movements strictly controlled — for the last eight years. He’s been in and out of institutions before, but this has been his longest stretch and he’s now pushing 40 — no longer a young man with a world of opportunities before him.

As both the “pre-release guy” and citizens’ advisory committee member for Canada’s oldest penitentiary, Mitchell is a highly valued, appointed volunteer who wants to see ex-inmates succeed and safely reintegrate into the outside world. He knows that the keys to success include housing, contacts in the community and, of course, a steady job — things that many offenders have never had. And that’s where Mitchell and other volunteers in the program can help.

“I tell the inmate right off the bat that I’m not interested in him from a legal standpoint,” he explains. “I tell them I’m only interested in where he is going and how he plans to support himself.

“We started the Pre-Release Program as a pilot back in 2005. A lot of CSC employees, including former KP Warden Monty Bourke, Unit Manager Marg Rhodes, Assistant Warden Robert Clark,

volunteer Sharon Mitchell and many others helped design it. So far, it’s working very well.”

### Breaking Down the Barriers

“Fifty percent of the guys who walk in here think they know it all and at first they are doubtful about what I have to offer. I have to work hard to break down the barriers and gain their trust. I use my business skills — speaking ability, controlling a conversation, salesmanship, and being able to read and understand people — to get through to them.

“I give inmates as much information as they can handle so when they walk out of here they know their options and they have a plan. I encourage them to think about all the essentials: transportation, reading a city map, finding a place to live, education, a job. You can tell it’s not easy for them at first. Many of them are alone and without support. Once they are released, they will have to think for themselves.”

The proper paperwork is essential outside an institution but many inmates have lost theirs over the course of time or never had it in the first place. If these details are taken care of before release, inmates have a better chance of succeeding.

“I try to help them with their money, as well,” says Mitchell. “Typically, they leave here without very much. They need to be thrifty if they are going to survive. I give them a sheet called Pre-Release Tips. Often they head for the Kingston bus station and right next door is a Tim Horton’s. They can get the soup, a roll and a doughnut with a cup of coffee deal before they board the bus. ‘It’ll cost you \$3.82,’ I tell them. Little tips like that help them save.”

### Skills and Schooling

But they’ll need more than just a full stomach if they are to make their way in the world. Mitchell has done hours of thorough research to help provide offenders who lack education and job skills — and that’s most of them — with the contacts they’ll need in the urban centres.

“I often point them to an organization in Toronto called the Universal Workers Union’s Lifelong Learning Centre. It offers training in an array of construction work: laying sewer

pipe, concrete forming, house framing and many more skills. They not only acquire a sub-trade, but they also pay only \$400 for the course. And when they finish, they can start out at \$16 per hour on a job site and within a year they are making \$24 per hour. That’s real money!”

Beyond job assistance, Mitchell educates offenders about tenants’ rights, birth certificate applications and social services, anything that can keep these men afloat while they adjust to life outside the institution.

“I’m always on the lookout for information that is going to help these guys. And when they come in here with a problem, I tell them that I will try to solve it *today*. In my position, I have the luxury of time to do that.”

### Motivation to Help Others

Why does a respected businessman devote hundreds of hours to this effort when he could be investing the time in his own business? What is the payoff for this hard working and thoughtful man? And why does he want to help this segment of the population in particular, a group that many people would rather ignore?

“At 8:30 in the morning, I change from Grant Mitchell, salesman and administrator, to a very different role in here. My job is to help these men understand that it is time to get on with their lives, to take a new role and to show them that if they make an effort, there are opportunities available. I get a lot of gratification from knowing that I’ve helped some of these guys and contributed to making our communities safer.”

### Information and Sound Advice

Inmate Robert leaves after talking with Mitchell for over half an hour. This is their first encounter, but before Robert is released he will probably be back to see the pre-release guy again. Mitchell will be ready for him with more helpful information and advice that will help him on his way and just might keep him out of trouble with the law.

As they leave the interview room, another inmate hails Mitchell as he passes by. “I’m getting out in a year, man. Don’t forget me!” Mitchell smiles, nods and gives him a thumbs up. You can bet that Grant Mitchell won’t forget anybody. ♦

# Circles of Support and Accountability WHAT WORKS



Left to right: Edmonton Police Detective Wil Tonowski, former Ottawa Police Chief Vince Bevan, human rights lawyer Lawrence Greenspon, Roxanne Lief, Director of the Washington State Institute for Public Policy at the *What Works* conference

**C**ircles of Support and Accountability (CoSA), the 12-year old volunteer-run initiative that has proven to be an effective method for dealing with high-risk, high-needs sex offenders released at warrant expiry into communities across Canada, was highlighted at a recent national conference in Ottawa.

BY **Bill Rankin**, Communications Officer,  
Communications and Citizen Engagement Sector

Photos: **Bill Rankin**

Public Safety Canada Minister Stockwell Day, in his opening remarks at the *What Works* conference, invited participants to bring forward ideas for reducing the rate of repeat offences. In response, respected human rights lawyer Lawrence Greenspon, Edmonton and Toronto police detectives Wil Tonowski and Wendy Leaver, former Ottawa Police Chief Vince Bevan, Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) staff, and others praised the CoSA program for its long track record of effectiveness.

## How It Started

Just how does CoSA work and where did it start? CoSA-Ottawa program director Susan Love explains:

“CoSA originated in Hamilton in 1994 with Mennonite Pastor Harry Nigh, who befriended a mentally delayed, repeat sex offender — a man who had been in and out of institutions his entire life. Nigh and some of his parishioners formed a support group and obtained funding from the Mennonite Central Committee of Ontario and CSC to keep the group going. It was effective; the man did not re-offend.”

A few months later, a similar situation arose in Toronto that would play a large part

in CoSA's inception. Another sex offender had been released amid a public outcry and a circle was formed to support him. And again, it worked. From these two acts, which mirrored the “radical hospitality” espoused by the Christian Gospels, sprang what has since become a world-renowned project embraced by faith and non-faith groups alike.

## Creating National Unity

Today, the organization has chapters in Canadian cities from Newfoundland and Labrador to British Columbia, each with the same mission statement but separate in every other way. This lack of unity is a situation that CoSA leaders want to change. They hope to meet soon to discuss a more strategic approach and ways to develop a stronger national voice.

“Nobody can deny the effectiveness of CoSA,” says Love. “We walk with these guys, form a surrogate family around them, offer them practical support and a friendly ear. Each offender signs a covenant to commit to the terms of the program, including being involved for a minimum period of one year. They must have a two-fold motivation for joining: not to return to prison and, most importantly, never to harm another person again.

“Another great thing about CoSA is its cost-effectiveness. It's run by volunteers and they make it work. There's no question about it. To

my knowledge, none of our guys in Ottawa, current or past, have re-offended sexually. And studies have shown that it reduces recidivism rates by about 60 percent.”

## Motivation to Help

When one CoSA volunteer was asked what prompted him to work with sex offenders, he replied, “I used to be like everyone else. I hated these guys. Then I met one. I realized pretty quickly that he's just like me. He's a human being just like I am. Once I understood that, I could not turn my back on him. I hate what he's done but if he's willing to do his part, I'm willing to be there to help him. I don't want there to be any more victims.”

No more victims is the bottom line and with the help of CSC and other supporters, CoSA will continue to make Canadian communities safer places to live.

For more information, see the evaluation report of the CoSA pilot project [www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/rsrch/reports/r168/r168\\_e.shtml](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/rsrch/reports/r168/r168_e.shtml). The following is an excerpt: “Overall, CoSA participants have been responsible for considerably less sexual, violent, and general offending in comparison to their matched compatriots, ultimately contributing to savings both financially and, more importantly, in regard to human suffering.” Robin J. Wilson, Janice E. Picheca and Michelle Prinzo, Correctional Service of Canada. ♦



**Susan Love**,  
Ottawa Program  
Director, Circles  
of Support and  
Accountability

# Successful Reintegration of Ethnocultural Offenders

Safe Transition of Offenders into the Community

## Adapting and Reinforcing CSC's Basic Programs

**T**hanks to its research-based correctional approach and programs, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) enjoys an excellent reputation that extends beyond the nation's borders to as far away as countries such as Kosovo and, more recently, Afghanistan. Whether in institutions or in the community, CSC administered programs target offenders' criminogenic factors and prepare them for release on parole. However, do these same highly effective programs adequately meet the needs of ethnocultural offenders?

BY **Djamila Amellal, Ph.D.**, Communications Officer, Communications and Citizen Engagement Sector

Photo: Bill Rankin

Professionals in the field of corrections speak of high-quality programs such as the Living Skills Program, the Substance Abuse Intervention Program, the Program for Sexual Offenders, the Violence Prevention Program, or the education and employment programs, to name just a few. However, in the case of ethnocultural offenders, these programs can further be strengthened. According to Marcel Kabundi, National Manager, Ethnocultural Programs, NHQ, to ensure that programs recommended in the correctional plan of ethnocultural offenders have an effect, these programs must be individualized.

### Start at the Beginning

"When I arrived at the Leclerc Institution in the Quebec Region in 1987," explains Marcel Kabundi, "I was surprised to find that a unit, commonly known as the 'United Nations,' covered all of the offenders belonging to ethnic minorities. I also noted that my colleagues experienced communication problems when faced with the varying cultures of the offenders. Moreover, the mediocre quality of language interpretation at some parole hearings could mislead the members of the National Parole Board (NPB), resulting in erroneous decisions in granting parole or maintaining in detention."

As a result of these observations and

consultations with NPB Headquarters in Ottawa, the ethnocultural diversity awareness course was developed and given to an initial group of CSC Quebec employees at the Laval Staff College by Kabundi. This first tool opens the door to many others, such as Commissioner's Directive (CD) 767 *Ethnocultural Offender Programs*.

### A Big Step Forward

"When I arrived in 1991 at National Headquarters," Kabundi adds, "I found that it was necessary to start from scratch to bring about changes. We needed a policy that would take into account the specific needs of ethnocultural offenders, and whose ultimate objective was to adapt regular CSC programs to the situation of ethnocultural offenders. This would lead to better results."

In 1994, the CSC Audit and Investigation Sector performed an internal audit to review the scope of the programs offered to Aboriginal and ethnocultural offenders. The audit Report recommends, in part, that *NHQ should clarify which assessment strategies and psychological tests can be used for Native and ethnocultural offenders (Rec. 2), that appropriate cross-cultural awareness training be strongly encouraged for all staff, especially those who have direct regular contact with inmates (Rec. 4) and that regions and institutions review the role which Native and ethnocultural communities can play (Rec. 5)*.

As a result of this report, the CD *Ethnocultural Offender Programs* was created. It strengthens the basic programs by requiring that the diverse needs of ethnocultural offenders be taken into account in order to *effectively* help them correct the factors related to their criminal behaviour and reduce the risk of recidivism.

At the time, the hard work involved in crafting the CD *Ethnocultural Offender Programs* started in cooperation with Mario Dion, former Deputy Commissioner, Correctional Operations and Programs Sector and now Chairman of the National Parole Board. "CD 767 changed a lot of things from the outset," Kabundi said. "This directive then became the in-house source document and resulted in a great deal of progress, such as the creation of

Marcel Kabundi, recipient of the Black History Month Steering Committee Professional Excellence Award was declared Person of the Week by Radio-Canada and *LeDroit* newspaper.



regional ethnocultural advisory committees of professionals representative of Canada's general and prison population, the Multiculturalism Award, and the recruitment of ethnically diverse staff in order to have the internal cultural skills crucial to communication and intervention with ethnocultural minority offenders."

### Work Remaining

Professionals in the field consider that the objective should not be having specific programs for ethnocultural offenders, but rather adapting and enhancing the foundations of the CSC basic programs so as to customize intervention. This approach will guarantee the quality of these programs.

The same professionals, including the CSC Chair of the National Advisory Ethnocultural Committee, Professor E. Douyon, following data collected throughout CSC regions, recommend, for example, that CSC take a further look at the criteria for validating cultural equivalencies for correctional programs, such as content equivalency, and the relevance of components for the culture at issue and for the offender being assessed. Do these components have the same meaning for all cultures? Is the evaluation method comparable between cultures? Is the interpretation of the components the same, given that each culture has its own norms?

"All these aspects and parameters must be included in order to adapt and customize CSC programs, based on the criminogenic and cultural needs of offenders belonging to ethnic minorities," Kabundi explains. "It is essential that the assessment, analysis and interpretation tools be adapted to ethnocultural differences in order to make fair and informed decisions." ♦



# Partnerships and Employment Support Reintegration

**T**oday, more than ever, the safe transition and reintegration of offenders into the community requires not only preparing offenders for parole from the beginning of their sentences, but also creating partnerships within the community that will receive the offenders. It is this ultimate objective that CSC is pursuing, day after day, by building bridges with various groups in the community.

*The manager of National Ethnocultural Programs, Marcel Kabundi, talks to us about the issue and about current and future achievements related to ethnocultural offenders.*

BY **Djamila Amellal, Ph.D.**, Communications Officer, Communications and Citizen Engagement Sector

**Photos: Bill Rankin and Courtesy of Peter Daniels**

“Building bridges and establishing partnerships with the community and with business people, in particular, is at the heart of CSC’s Mission,” said Kabundi. “That is why, in 2005, thanks to the financial aid provided by Canadian Heritage, we organized a conference in Toronto entitled *Building Bridges with Ethnocultural Communities*. It was a resounding success. It allowed the business community to gain awareness of the reality that offenders

face when they are released from institutions — the stigma of a criminal record, their cultural affiliation and their training acquired during their incarceration. There have been numerous positive spin-offs from the conference, including a very useful guide that provides a list of companies that will support parolees seeking employment.”

## One of So Many Initiatives

The Toronto conference has achieved its objective, and has not only built awareness around the potential of this new labour force, but has also paved the way for several partnerships with a variety of business people. A good example is the partnership between CSC and Full Circle Bicycles.

Full Circle Bicycles is a Mississauga-based company owned by Peter Daniels, who originally comes from Trinidad. Daniels signed an agreement with CSC to offer professional training and technical advice on vehicle maintenance to women offenders from Grand Valley Institution in Kitchener. This training in a non-traditional field has been specifically requested by offenders.

“I am very happy to be part of this innovative project and to make a contribution to public safety,” commented Daniels. “When offenders acquire sought-after skills, this gives them a better chance to find a job quickly.

“This project is important for me. For practical reasons, we have decided that the



**Peter Daniels**



CSC Diversity Committee members Marcel Kabundi and Bill Staubi (both in orange headgear) meet with leaders of the Sikh community in Ottawa to discuss ethnocultural issues and the rights of offenders from the Sikh community.

years by Heritage Canada. The memorandum of understanding has just been signed and the funding is already beginning to generate noteworthy initiatives related to the reintegration of ethnocultural offenders. One such initiative is the KARIBU program (a Swahili term meaning *welcome*).

### The KARIBU Program: Well-Planned and Fair

The funding from Heritage Canada has enabled the development of a second conference, which will take place later this year, to build on the momentum of *Building Bridges*. The KARIBU program, a long-term effort based on research in criminology and data collected by ethno-cultural advisory committees across Canada, will be unveiled at that conference.

KARIBU is the result of a collaborative effort between Kabundi and internationally known psychologist Professor Emerson Douyon, the Chairman of the National Ethnocultural Advisory Committee.

“Professor Douyon and I are working to develop the KARIBU program, which is specifically geared to ethnocultural offenders,” said Kabundi. “This program takes into consideration many of the details contained in Commissioner’s Directive 767 in order to effectively address the needs of offenders. KARIBU is a comprehensive program that also includes a chapter on offenders who will be deported at some point in time during their sentence because they are not Canadian citizens.”

In addition to this eagerly awaited program, the upcoming conference will include the presentation of other extremely useful tools, including a list of CSC employees who speak many languages and can assist as cultural mediators in various ways behind the walls, such as at the initial admission assessment or in conflict situations. They also hope to establish a list of business champions who will hire parolees from ethnocultural communities.

“These champions will reinforce our objectives by making official commitments to give these offenders a second chance – despite their criminal records and the differences in their appearance from the rest of society,” explains Kabundi.

Many community partners, professionals, and role models from Canadian ethno-cultural communities have been invited to the conference, which will also help raise awareness of CSC’s mission. It’s a way to express to members of the community how much CSC values their contribution, their role in working with parolees, and their contribution to public safety.

### All Roads Lead to Rome

Kabundi, who brings to this task 20 years’ experience at CSC and his experience as a magistrate in his native Congo, says alternative routes have been needed to overcome challenges. He has personally solicited the support of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE) for ethno-cultural offenders on parole, and now educates the executives about the discrimination offenders face in the community and their difficulties in finding employment.

“Integration only occurs through employment,” he says, “so the only solution is to inform and educate people in the business community who can help out. These education efforts are in the interest of offenders, CSC and the safety of the entire community.”

While work continues on other projects that will be unveiled at the conference, Kabundi says that support for the conference continues to pour in. For instance, CCCE Executive Vice-President David Stewart-Patterson has confirmed participation in the conference.

Proud of his intuition about the future, Kabundi adds: “We are on the right track. Little by little, we are getting closer to our objectives and I am very optimistic. We must strengthen existing partnerships and establish new ones. We must raise awareness and educate people because they need to understand that it is our duty to contribute and that we all have a role to play. Each of us must bring a piece to rebuild the broken walls and create a harmonious living environment characterized by respect for our diversity. We must not hesitate to reach out to others. We have a moral obligation to help each other and give a second chance to those who deserve it. Isn’t this what the sense of collective responsibility and social solidarity are all about?” ♦

company representatives will go to the institution to provide the offenders with theoretical and practical training at various levels and in various subject components. This training will last three to six months, depending on the candidate’s level. Offenders will be awarded a certificate on completion of the training.

“Full Circle always recruits trained employees,” Daniels notes. “These offenders can apply for jobs within this company or other companies when out on conditional release. It is hoped that the job will motivate them and ease their gradual and safe return into the community, will ensure financial independence, and promote a feeling of pride and accomplishment.”

### Determination Pays Off

As outlined in the action plan from the first conference, Kabundi, a man of vision, set down to the hard work of finding the necessary funding to carry out a multitude of projects similar to the Full Circle Bicycles project. His determination has paid off. Under the program Enhancing the Cultural Competency of CSC in Dealing With Ethnocultural Communities and Offenders from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds, CSC has been granted \$400,000 over three



## Community Supervision of Offenders

# The Case of Mr. Z

**S**ection 810 peace bonds are court orders that enable the police to protect the public by requiring an individual who poses a threat to society to abide by specific conditions for up to one year. This is the story of how this complex and demanding process is successfully coordinated by criminal justice partners and includes the key role played by the Correctional Service of Canada.

BY **Bill Rankin**, Communications Officer, Communications and Citizen Engagement Sector,  
**Teal Maedel**, Psychologist, Vancouver Parole, and RCMP Staff Sergeant/Psychologist  
**Matt Logan**, Behavioural Science Group

Photo: Pierre St-Jacques

Mr. Z is an offender with a lengthy criminal history. For his most recent crime, he was sentenced to seven years inside the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC's) maximum-security Kent Institution near Chilliwack, British Columbia. When he reached his parole eligibility date, the National Parole Board (NPB) decided to keep him in prison until warrant expiry.

The NPB decision was based, in part, on CSC's contribution to the process. CSC psychologist Teal Maedel carefully assessed Mr. Z's risk and concluded that for numerous reasons he should be detained. As Mr. Z's warrant expiry date draws near, CSC and its partners want to take action to ensure that he receives adequate supervision and support once he is outside the jurisdiction of the Service.

### Effective Measures

Currently, to help ensure public safety, law enforcement depends on some very innovative and effective measures – legislation that has evolved to allow offenders like Mr. Z to be controlled with restrictions that extend beyond their warrant expiry dates.

One of these powerful legal tools is called a Section 810 (of the *Criminal Code of Canada*) recognizance order. It allows police to impose restrictions for up to one year after release if there are reasonable grounds to expect an offender may commit a serious personal injury offence. Strict conditions can be imposed, including a measure that prohibits a suspect

Mr. Z is released under the 810 order imposed by the court.

from possessing firearms or ammunition, and another that requires the offender to report to police or a correctional authority. Section 810s have been particularly useful in cases where prior violent crimes resulted in a sentence that was eventually completed, as in the case of Mr. Z.

### Essential Intelligence Networks

As Mr. Z's release date approaches, law enforcement agencies are in close communication with CSC institutional parole officers who provide information from their own files on the offender, including his risk and psychological assessment and evidence of his crime cycle. In the Pacific Region, these data are relayed to the RCMP Behavioural Science Group (BSG), which has developed highly sophisticated intelligence networks to gather all available high-risk offender information, not only from CSC, but also from the Vancouver Police Department's High-Risk Offender Unit.

RCMP behavioural psychologist Staff Sergeant Matt Logan explains: "Using a template called I-SPIN, we take all this information... Every known location frequented by each of these offenders is plotted on an electronic mapping system and colour coded to correspond with the template score given to each offender."

"This system is crucial," says Staff Sgt. Logan. "Should there be [an offence committed] in a particular location, the mapping system will identify the most likely suspects"

But I-SPIN is only half the story. Both the RCMP and Vancouver Police have at their disposal observation teams (I-SPOT) that closely monitor offenders who show signs of trouble. These teams, ideally made up of full-time units of 10 officers, are trained in surveillance techniques and in understanding offenders and their specific crime cycles.

### Preparing for Mr. Z's Release

Three months prior to his release, Mr. Z's name is passed from the CSC Warrant Expiry Date Coordinator to the High Risk Recognizance Advisory Committee (HRRAC), an interagency coordinating body that reviews every federal offender that has been detained until his or her warrant expiry date, with an eye to applying an 810 order. A case review by HRRAC weighs many factors, including Mr. Z's refusal

to cooperate while incarcerated and the disturbing reports of some of his victims.

### A Legal Threshold

The two psychologists on the committee, Teal Maedel and Staff Sgt. Logan, help their fellow committee members reach a consensus: Mr. Z should be subject to sanctions once he is released. Now, the committee turns to Crown Counsel Roger Cutler to tell them whether the offender meets the legal threshold for imposing the 810 order.

Cutler ponders the key legal question: *Are there reasonable grounds to fear that Mr. Z will commit a serious personal injury offence on his release?* Because of Mr. Z's criminal record, his refusal to take programs while incarcerated and the results of his recent psychiatric assessments, the Crown prosecutor believes an 810 order should be sought that includes specific conditions (no alcohol or drugs), with the aim of preventing his crime cycle from being triggered.

### The 810 Coordinator

Once these decisions are made, Mr. Z's file is passed on to 810 Coordinator Judy Dizey, a detective from the RCMP Behavioural Science Group and an expert at preparing the report for Crown counsel that will be handed to the judge in charge of granting the order. Offender information, including victim target group, known residences, associates, crime cycle and many other factors, is part of the report to Crown prosecutors.

In the meantime, Detective Dizey makes the journey from downtown Vancouver to Kent Institution to interview Mr. Z and inform him of the intent to impose the order. After mulling it over and weighing his options, Mr. Z realizes that he has little chance of successfully blocking it and decides not to legally contest the order. This is a relief for law enforcement; a challenge would eat up valuable time. Naturally, for everyone involved, offender consent for an 810 order is the preferred route.

### Everyone Gets Ready

The court imposes the order two weeks before Mr. Z's release, and now police are empowered to take over the functions of monitoring and, if need be, intervention. The offender has refused the offer of a Circle of

Support—dedicated and trained volunteers who would keep a close eye on him, report any evidence of him entering into another crime cycle and help him in his transition into the community on release.

Mr. Z informs his institutional parole officer that he intends to head for Vancouver once he is released. The Vancouver Police's High Risk Offender Unit is notified. Another team, the Coordinated High Risk Offender Management team (CHROME), composed of police, a community probation officer, a psychologist and outreach workers, is waiting in Vancouver, ready to help Mr. Z with his transition into the community.

The two weeks finally pass and Mr. Z is released, on the street and on the move. Will he comply with the conditions of his 810 order? For a few days, the answer is 'yes,' but then both the Vancouver Police and CHROME workers note signs of deterioration in his attitude and a return to his crime cycle: he skips a therapy session, neglects to complete daily logs on his thoughts and feelings, and cooks up a story about why he can't meet with support workers. CHROME notifies Behavioural Sciences and an I-SPOT team is quickly dispatched and begins surveillance.

It's not long before their man reveals his intentions. The team trails him by vehicle and on foot to one of his old haunts, a crumbling block of dilapidated hotels near the corner of Main and Hastings in Vancouver's notorious east end. He's observed buying cocaine from a drug dealer and kibitzing with known



The Pacific Region team involved in the 810 order process. Left to right: Steve Howell, British Columbia (BC) Corrections; Teal Maedel, on secondment to RCMP-BSG from CSC and past Chair, Pacific Region NJC; Roger Cutler, Crown counsel, BC Criminal Justice Branch; Greg Fitch, Director, Ministry of the BC Attorney General and Pacific Region National Joint Committee Chair, Senior Criminal Justice Officials; Staff Sergeant Matt Logan, RCMP; Bob Brown, Corrections Program Director, International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy

prostitutes along their stroll. Clearly, the offender has no wish to stick to his conditions. The I-SPOT team quickly nabs him before he can progress in his crime cycle. He is charged with possession of a narcotic and breach of recognizance.

“In British Columbia,” comments Crown Counsel Cutler, “our courts take breaches of 810s much more seriously than breaches of other court orders. The judges recognize the risk the community is exposed to and they know that the offender fully understood that his breach triggers his criminal behaviour.”

Mr. Z is handed a sentence of three months. While in custody, outreach workers visit him and discuss the breach and plans are made for substance abuse treatment. On release, I-SPOT surveillance resumes while outreach workers help the offender find a place to live and other efforts are made to stabilize him.

### A Year Later

Fast forward almost a year to a time close to the expiry of the 810 order. Since his release after the breach conviction, Mr. Z has been compliant, crime free and cooperating with outreach workers. The I-SPOT surveillance has been called off, but HRRAC members agree that an application for renewal of the 810 order is necessary. Before they make the application, the offender is brought in for another psychological assessment.

“Mr. Z is one of those individuals who seems to thrive on structure and support” the psychologist reports. “His history both in custody and on release indicates that his present success is due to it, at least in part.”

The 810 coordinator prepares another application and the Crown takes it to court three weeks before expiry of the first order. Mr. Z opposes the application. He is quickly

placed on bail with conditions identical to the expiring order and a trial date is set. At the trial, six months later, the court grants a renewal for another year.

The year passes uneventfully and Mr. Z’s support system in the community continues to strengthen: he has settled into an apartment and been hired at a local recycling plant. He is assessed again and no renewal of the 810 order is sought.

### Partners in Safety

Mr. Z’s 810 order is a study in cooperation between criminal justice partners. It highlights the importance of strong alliances and interagency communication in managing the risk of re-offending and provides the offender with incentives to participate in the community. CSC plays a key role in this complex response and makes an essential contribution to community safety. ♦



A flak jacket, Kevlar helmet and ballistic goggles are essential gear for Thérèse LeBlanc and all other Canadian government personnel that travel throughout the country.

## CSC Expertise in Afghanistan From Kabul to Kandahar

**C**SC Assistant Deputy Commissioner Thérèse LeBlanc was high in the sky, gazing down from a Hercules air transport plane at the jagged, granite spine of the Hindu Kush, thousands of feet below. She was on her way from Kabul, Afghanistan’s capital, to the city of Kandahar, a Taliban stronghold in the country’s southernmost reaches.

BY **Bill Rankin**, Communications Officer,  
Communications and Citizen Engagement Sector

Photos courtesy of Thérèse LeBlanc

### An International Effort

When LeBlanc reached her destination, she would become one of thousands of international workers including approximately 2,500 members of the Canadian Armed Forces currently serving as part of Joint Task Force Afghanistan. They play a key role in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force mission whose goal, according



to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) is “to help bring security and stability, and foster development in Afghanistan.”

### Experience and Expertise

As a manager with decades of correctional expertise, LeBlanc’s three-week mission (mid-July to August 2006) was one of the most recent chapters in CSC’s involvement in Afghanistan. It started approximately four years ago when CSC Special Advisor Dru Allen journeyed to Kabul to help develop a 10-year strategy for the Afghan Ministry of Justice entitled *Justice for All*.

LeBlanc’s goal was to assess the Afghan correctional system in Kandahar: staff training needs, building and rebuilding of facilities, administrative reform and determine what role CSC could play in the future. Before departing for the southern city, LeBlanc made a four-day stop in Kabul, where she met with the Afghan minister of justice; Rick Reiman, Winnipeg Parole Area Director – CSC’s current representative in the capital; the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan; and representatives from the Ministry of Justice working group on prisons and detentions centres, as well as other international partners involved in the rebuilding of the country.

“This set the stage for me,” commented LeBlanc. “and gave me an overall look at the national strategy, achievements to date and future challenges. I also toured the Pol E Charki Prison outside of Kabul [a multi-nationally funded project]. Old sections have been refurbished and a new maximum-security section area is being constructed as part of the Ministry of Justice’s strategic plan. It’s close to completion. My time in Kabul provided me with an overview and a framework on which to base my assessment of the progress in the prison system once I got to Kandahar.”

### Reaching Kandahar

LeBlanc’s military transport touched down in the southern city at the Kandahar Air Force Base, home to a multinational security force of several thousand soldiers. During the first 48 hours, she met with Canadian military and Afghan government officials who provided an overview of the



Pol E Charki Prison outside of Kabul

situation and challenges faced in the Kandahar region. For living accommodations, she was transported in a Canadian military armoured personnel carrier that threaded its way in a convoy to the smaller Canadian military base, known as the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), located across the city on the grounds of an old canning factory. Engineers had converted the facility to accommodate 250 troops as well as representatives from various federal government departments – the Canadian International Development Agency, DFAIT, RCMP and CSC – who are part of the international effort.

“It was a lot like living in a CSC correctional institution,” LeBlanc comments, “a perimeter wall and guard towers all around. You were free to travel anywhere within the perimeter but leaving the base required a military convoy escort. During those forays everyone’s life was at risk so you didn’t ask lightly to go. It had to be absolutely necessary.”

### Touring the Prisons

Sarpoza, the provincial prison, was a 40-minute drive from the PRT base. On a typical journey, with a searing, outdoor air temperature of 58 °C, the personnel carriers quickly heated up. Passengers sweated inside their 30-lb. flak jackets and constantly swigged from their water bottles to stave off dehydration.

LeBlanc toured various correctional facilities, communicating with staff through an interpreter, and seeing firsthand the basic conditions both for offenders and for the extremely dedicated employees. Based on her impressions, she has made numerous recommendations concerning



A military convoy rolls through the streets of Kandahar.

possible training and mentoring opportunities between CSC trainers and Afghan prison staff and cross-training opportunities with the RCMP and Afghan National Police on such topics as search methods and human rights issues.

“The Afghans that I met were very grateful for Canada’s presence and assistance and wanted this to continue,” said LeBlanc. “And the young Canadian soldiers I talked to were extremely committed to the mission. They face the dangers with bravery. The RCMP is also doing great work with the Afghan police.”

All in all, LeBlanc says it was an amazing experience on so many levels and a once-in-a-lifetime chance to make a contribution to global security. Would she go back? “I’d love to,” she says, “but it would take some long conversations with my family in light of the continued security issues faced in the region!”

As a direct result of LeBlanc’s work, in early February CSC deployed two staff to the PRT to begin a training and mentoring program with staff at the provincial prison in Kandahar. ♦

## Contributions in Line with Our Resources

# Sustainable Development Strategy 2007–2010



BY **Paul Provost, M.Sc.**, National Coordinator, Environmental Protection Programs

Photo: Bill Rankin

**Pushkar Godbole, Acting Director General, Technical Services; Ruth Rathwell, Officer, Environmental Programs; Paul Provost, National Coordinator, Environment Protection Programs; and Lucien Gosselin, Manager, Environmental Programs, have coordinated the development of the SDS in close consultation with all regions. Absent from the photo: Jocelyne Landriault, Environmental Programs Officer.**

**O**n March 1, 2007, the Honourable Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety Canada, tabled to Parliament the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) fourth Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS). The strategy set out CSC's environmental commitments for April 2007 to March 2010, building on the 1997, 2000 and 2003 SDSs. With the experience gained throughout the last decade, we produced an SDS that seeks a balance between the sustainable development goals we wish to reach and the targets we can reasonably achieve. Our task is proving to be rather challenging because federal departments required to submit SDSs can be audited by the Office of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development on their success in meeting recommended targets. Considering that the list of requirements keeps growing while dedicated resources remain limited, we needed to adjust our expectations to bring them in line with our resources.

### Nature of the Contributions

Although environmental issues have remained relatively unchanged since our first SDS, this time we focused more rigorously toward our forthcoming environmental contributions. On these grounds, we encourage you to consult our 2007–2010 SDS which includes a four-level logic model based on a hierarchical structure of goals, objectives, commitments and targets.

To achieve the strategic outcome to “contribute to a just, peaceful and safe Canadian society, respectful of natural resources and ecological capacities,” the new strategy renews our commitments to the following aspects:

1. reduction of greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change
2. protection of the atmosphere
3. conservation of air quality in the lower atmosphere
4. protection of the hydrosphere

5. support for sustainable communities
6. sustainable use of natural resources
7. strengthened governance and decisions that support sustainable development.

CSC has made a commitment to pursue diligently, until 2010, fourteen specific, measurable, attainable targets that are realistically achievable in a timely manner.

### Scope of Commitments

Some will think that the scope of commitments in the new SDS is too modest since the targets—although more numerous than in the 2000 and 2003 SDSs—may appear to make an insignificant contribution to sustainable development. However, we must look beneath the surface and consider long-term gains. Except for the SDS 2003, previous strategies failed to achieve most of the expected targets, primarily because we did not have the resources to improve and accurately assess our performance in certain

areas. This time we have tried to reap maximum benefit from those lessons learned by making specific commitments that are in line with the resources currently available to us. Aspiring to do more for the environment and sustainable development is definitely a laudable goal, and we should pursue it tirelessly. However, if we keep repeating the same mistakes we will end up losing the credibility that is crucial to the progress of any undertaking. In short, sometimes it is better to backtrack somewhat so we can review and strengthen our foundations, rather than to keep working on unsettled ground.

### Priority Action

Both financial and human resources allocated to environmental programs and sustainable development have remained relatively unchanged since 1997, while environmental demands have continued to grow. To reduce this gap, we must focus on wisely allocating resources, especially at the institution level. This approach is vital to keeping environmental protection a priority and will result in concrete actions leading to significant outcomes. In brief, we are counting on the 2007–2010 SDS to exceed all our past commitments!

For more information about CSC's Sustainable Development Strategy 2007–2010, please go to [http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/publictitle\\_e.shtml](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/publictitle_e.shtml) ♦