

Executive Summary – To Build a Nation’s Heart

Nation-Building through Participation, Service, and Shared Culture

Developed by: Rupendra Dhillon

(August 2025)

Canada's material conditions are strong, yet many citizens feel isolated, over-stretched, and adrift. For many, public life can feel episodic rather than cumulative—a rotation of choices rather than a shared project; voters sometimes switch parties out of fatigue—“*maybe something will change this time...*” The task before leadership is to restore purpose, belonging, and trust by giving every Canadian a visible way to help build the country.

This strategy advances three mutually reinforcing pillars: **Building People, Building Force, and Building Spirit**. Together they convert spectators into builders, rebuild civic confidence, and strengthen Canada for the long term.

Building People. Create a broad ecosystem of volunteer programs tied directly to nation-building outcomes. Lower barriers to entry through public awareness and modest household benefits; sustain participation with performance-based public funding that scales what works. Track impact transparently in a national portal, celebrate genuine excellence, promote from within, and institutionalize mentorship. *Resist false praise; standards and trust rise when recognition is earned.*

Building Force. Modern defence is technology-centred and requires mid-career mastery. Extend retirement eligibility for technology roles, modernize pensions to account for age and stage at entry, and open lateral-entry pathways for specialists. Increase youth exposure to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) through schools, programs, and civic presence; study a time-limited national service model. Strengthen immigration integrity and align naturalization with contribution — language and conduct thresholds, regular audits, and pathways that recognize service and significant cultural, technological, or community achievements.

Building Spirit. Forge a confident Canadian culture by blending settler and immigrant traditions with First Nations heritage. Elevate Indigenous cultural events nationally, support immersion in ceremonies, crafts, and cuisine, and highlight Canadian literature and arts across many languages. In parallel, protect a neutral public square: adopt clear policies for

Canadian Public Life (CPL), including transparent, uniform rules for use of public spaces for faith-based expression that safeguard fairness for all.

What success looks like. Participation becomes identity; trust in institutions and leadership rises; CAF recruitment strengthens where capability is most needed; newcomers integrate in both rights **and** responsibilities; and a cohesive, generous civic culture takes root. Canada leads with calm strength — and every citizen has a way to say: *“I helped build this.”*