

DEVELOP INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Plans: The Solicitor General's department has embarked on a program of encouraging the involvement of the aboriginal people in native justice at the national policy, planning and research levels:

In the Consultation Centre, a Native has been engaged to develop action-oriented, innovative programs concerned with the delivery of service to aboriginal people and to work with aboriginal organizations involved with the justice system.

There is, as well, a Special Advisor, Native Programs, reporting directly to the Assistant Deputy Minister responsible to address the concern of the high number of aboriginal people in the correctional system and to develop pilot projects to confront this situation.

Fewer: Correctional Service Canada has developed a number of programs to ameliorate the conditions of federal inmates who are disproportionately represented in the correctional institutions and receiving proportionately fewer releases than the general inmate population.

Connections: One of these is the Native Liaison Worker program which provides a link between the aboriginal inmate, the institution and his community by giving him a perspective on his situation from within the institution. He is provided with counselling, educational and employment assistance, legal contacts, contact with his family and alternative placements.

Groups: The Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood Program encourages aboriginal inmates to form such groups to sponsor social and cultural activities. Spiritual advisers and elder counselling is also arranged through the use of contacts.

Shelter: Finally, there are community residential centres which function as half-way houses for aboriginal offenders and provide them with supervision, counselling, and room and board. One such location is AIMS House in Vancouver.

Efforts such as these make an unfortunate situation a bit more bearable for the time being. Visible minorities need to understand and work within a system of which, until now, they have been victims if any real changes are to be made.

RECOMMENDATION:

Solicitor General Canada should develop initiatives to involve members of visible minority communities in the planning and administration of correctional services.

RECOMMENDATION

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