

2. Alternative Sentence Planning

a. The Canadian Experience

Alternative Sentence Planning is a unique Canadian project of the Children's Home of Winnipeg, an agency built upon "a commitment to community-based alternatives to prevent institutionalization, to assist the institutionalized to re-enter society and to work together with individuals to help them develop their potential". The project receives demonstration project funding from federal, provincial and municipal sources. Andrew Smith, the Executive Director of the Project, appeared before the Committee.

The goal of Alternative Service Planning is to reduce imprisonment by providing a detailed alternative acceptable to the court and the offender. The Service is based on the belief that many people are imprisoned simply because of a lack of realistic alternatives being presented to the court. Alternative sentence plans are based on six principles:

- sentencing should promote *responsibility* by the offender (for his or her actions by encouraging him or her to be accountable for the harm resulting from the offence) and by the community (for the management of the criminal behaviour);
- sentencing should be *restorative* — it should correct the imbalance, hurt or damage caused by the offence;
- the sentence should be *reparative*, attempting to repair the physical, emotional or financial harm caused by the offence;
- the sentence should, wherever possible, attempt to bring *reconciliation* between the victim and the offender;
- sentencing should be *rehabilitative* by providing the offender with opportunities to deal with the issues that have contributed to the offence; and
- there should be a *democratization* of the criminal justice system to return justice to the community and place it in the immediate context of both the victim and the offender.