

Where the federal government continues to deliver services, public servants must show sensitivity to the values and perceptions of Aboriginal people. This Committee heard too many witnesses tell of departmental representatives who were ill-informed about Aboriginal people in general—not to mention those with disabilities. Those who provide services cannot be productive if their clientele does not accept them. Sometimes, good intentions and narrowly-defined technical expertise are not enough to produce results.

When more and more communities take responsibility for providing services, community and band leaders will be called upon to demonstrate awareness and sensitivity to all community members—including those with disabilities. The process of education, inspiration and meeting challenges must go on amongst Aboriginal leaders as it must for all Canadians. Consultation and participation of those affected by decisions is as critical at the community level as it is at the federal.

As a Committee, we have observed that, where consultation and participation is meaningful, programs are successful. For example, the Pathways to Success program shows how cooperation can work. This program, a joint venture between the Department of Employment and Immigration and Aboriginal people, functions under the auspices of a National Aboriginal Management Board. The Board currently uses Employment and Immigration programs in efforts to support Aboriginal training and employment across the country.