



NATIVE COURTWORKER
AND COUNSELLING ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Social Justice Policy Platform and Strategic Plan Richmond, BC April 18, 2013

Introduction

On April 18, 2013 the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC (NCCABC) brought together a group of key community stakeholders for a planning session to gain input into the organization's five year strategic objectives. The NCCABC developed a five-year Social Justice Policy Platform and Strategic Plan to help better guide the Association's actions and provide terms of reference for setting program priorities, for guiding program development and for the sanctioning of resource allocation.

The NCCABC provides an important connection or bridge to the community and a sense of caring and relationship while reducing hasty guilty pleas. Central to the discussions is the issue of Gladue reports, which stated there are too many aboriginal people in correctional institutions.

As well, the over-representation of Aboriginal people in Canada's correctional system continues to grow over the last decade. Since 2000-01, the federal Aboriginal inmate population has increased by 56.2%. The overall representation rate in the inmate population has increased from 17.0% in 2000-01 to 23.2% as of today.

Participants acknowledged while the statistics for incarceration have skyrocketed, the NCCABC is held up as a significant player in helping aboriginal people navigate the justice system.

This strategic planning session identified immediate solutions such as strategic placement of Native Courtworkers, building relationship with legal aid and helping to engage with the larger system of services and advocacy.

At the center of these strategic objectives is justice reform. While the organization is celebrating 40 years of service-impact, success and effectiveness were at the heart of the discussions in addressing complex, multi layered issues and challenges. A core question central to the day was "How do we become more effective as an organization to turn the tide of social justice?"

Attendees

Preston Guno, Walk Tall Program Manager, Carrier-Sekani Family Services
Ken Watts, Vice-President, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council
Michelle Lavergne, Métis Nation of BC
Pamela Shields, Legal Services Society of BC
Angela Kermer, Cpl., Aboriginal Gang Awareness Coordinator, Aboriginal Policing Services
Bill Small, BC Community Corrections
Donna Tennant, Program and Fund Development Consultant
Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President Union of BC Indian Chiefs
Hugh Braker, NCCABC President
Darlene Shackelly, NCCABC Executive Director
Arthur Paul, NCCABC Regional Manager

Process

This Social Justice Forum provided an opportunity to exchange information and experiences and to learn from one another. It also supported identifying the existing needs of Aboriginal people accessing the services in a meaningful manner as well as strategies and solutions that will focus on bringing forward the necessary changes. Interested leaders were contacted for a telephone interview with four responses. NCCABC prepared a document in order to provide opportunity for the leaders to be informed of the issues in advance of the session Tennant Derksen Creative Strategies Inc. was contracted to conduct the telephone interviews.

Transformation facilitated a one-day strategy planning session with key stakeholders. A 4 D Planning Framework was used of Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny- to identify gaps, imagine examine new possibilities and to identify emerging new actions to deliver the strategic objectives.

Gaps

- There needs to be a clear understanding of the role of the Native Courtworkers across the whole system
- Absence of Native Courtworkers in family court process is significant
- Funding support to address magnitude of issues and continued statistics of incarceration of Aboriginal people
- Need to hear the deafening roar of BC First Nation leadership to address exponential growth in incarceration despite acknowledgement of problem
- We need to be holding Ministry of Justice responsible for direction of incarceration. There needs to be a greater call of Aboriginal leadership and hold Ministry of Justice to task- calling for fundamental change in system. We need to follow through with a Justice Committee and call for required resources and fundamental change over incarceration rates.

Strategic Priorities

The group identified the following key strategic priorities:

#	STRATIGIC PRIORITY
1	Culturally relevant programs for youth involved in the system instead of non native organizations like John Howard, Elizabeth Fry
2	Monitor number of aboriginal girls being sent south away from their communities – NCCABC to advocate

3	Conduct inventory of all Aboriginal youth programs in BC- use this information with decision-makers
4	Establish and utilize Social Justice Council
5	Build stronger working relationships- Regional Health Authorities, Ministry of Child and Family Development, Representative for Children and Youth, First Nations Leadership Council, Métis Nation of BC, BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres - regular meetings, identify relationship needs- i.e. MOU's and protocols
6	Raise awareness with First Nation leadership
7	Enhance communications - Communication protocols to reach stakeholders
8	Set up Aboriginal Justice Council- Multi Agency initiative
9	Establish a Leadership Justice working group that is inclusive - Request commitment and guidance – convenes regularly, prioritizes actions -use NCCABC strategy plan as vehicle
10	Establish Justice Service hubs
11	Establish full time position for strategic planning implementation – support staff
12	Formalize Justice Committee- working group to tackle key issues
13	Establish Regional Justice Committees
14	More First Nations courts throughout province
15	Make NCCABC internal lobbyist position to represent key issues – negotiate funding for this position
16	After care/case management for court ordered restorative justice- related to Gladue Report
17	Capacity building strategy- helping remote communities understand what their rights are
18	Establish a resource database could be used with CFCSA
19	Examine Legal Aid barriers- evaluate and document
20	Organization expand role to address all justice needs- family, civil and criminal court
21	More inclusive approach to applying all Gladue principles in all stages of court process- training for whole legal system
22	Establish Aboriginal Justice Case Manager – there is currently no follow up or measurement of success.
23	Build capacity to identify statistics for youth committing crime- build database to target First Nations communities
24	No youth advocate checking on cells to see that youth have rights because it is a federal issue - no way to track or monitor- must use technology to begin capturing this data
25	Build strategy to start more First Nation small courts starting with key locations

Key Actions

- Develop and examine status MOU's where required to solidify strategic relationships
- Re-establish Aboriginal Justice Plan and host regional discussions on the plan
- Conduct inventory of all existing Indigenous youth program in BC
- Monitor number of girls sent to Burnaby youth custody from north and Vancouver Island regions
- Develop a resources data base for family, CFCSA, mediation, restorative justice, healing plans
- Reconsider utility of Social Justice Councils
- Increase communication of the organization
- Engage/identify key partners for Justice Council
- Train and engage with Gladue principles- identify core funding for this
- Partner to improve legal aid access

- Request BC leadership support and guidance with strategic plan- Formation and outline of working Terms of Reference
- Plan regional meetings to assess results
- Develop proactive budget to engage federal and provincial governments in discussion of the contract, it's scope and solutions
- To have a Native Courtworker in every community where there is a courthouse and based on population of Aboriginal people
- Justice committee made up of interested groups that provide support systems: MCFD, Health, First Nations bands, friendship centers, police, corrections, justice system reps
- Integrated funding to support other services such as youth court programs, family, women's support, alcohol and drug programs and prison services
- Establish mobile FN courts throughout the province
- Capacity building in Aboriginal communities to understand legal rights
- After care case management tracking for court ordered restorative justice sentences

Key Decisions

- Renegotiate terms of funding contract with federal and provincial government to expand scope in funding and strategic direction
- Evaluation and monitoring of progress
- Develop key partner approach
- Key communities to pilot an expanded integrated services model
- Board review, discuss, declare strategic plan and vision publicly