



Anishinaabe Governance is... **SETTING PRIORITIES & WORKING TOGETHER**

The 10 Year Talk, 1998-2008

The 10-Year Talk is a wrap-up report from community consultations on restoring our law-making over education and governance. In education the top three priorities were:

- 1. Language and Culture** - "We're talking about the survival of that language and we need to get on with it. Who we are as Anishinaabe is in our language." Henry Lewis-ba, Principal, Wasse Abin School, Wikwemikong.
- 2. Role of Parents** – "A child's education is primarily the responsibility of the parents. It's their role to teach their children from a young age the morals and ethics that will shape them in their adolescence."
- 3. Role of Community** – "Feedback from First nation citizens stressed that there is a need for communities to heal and move away from the convention of jealousy, anger and greed. This healing will enable parents to be involved in their children's educations and to be good role models."

In governance, the top three priorities were:

- 1. Removal of Indian Affairs** – "We can no longer accept the regulation of our inherent rights by flawed government policy." The central message is that self-governance will not be a reality if the Anishinabek Nation continues to operate within the standards of INAC and the Indian Act."
- 2. Unity/Nation Building** – "One theme remained consistent throughout the ten years: Nation Building. First Nation communities recognized the need to unite in order to be stronger and more supportive of each other. They also want their uniqueness and autonomy to be recognized by the Anishinabek Nation and be able to do things for themselves at a community level."
- 3. Constitution Development** – "Constitution development is truly a unifying process that brings people together under a single purpose: Nationhood." – Mike Restoule, Nipissing First Nation.

Community member input and infusion of traditional culture were top priority. With respect to items included in a constitution, membership/citizenship, appeals and redress, code of ethics, selection of leadership, declaration, and roles and responsibilities were some of the main items brought up by participants [in the constitution development workshops, 2003-2008]."

The Anishinabek Nation Education System and the Union of Ontario Indians

The Anishinabek Education System was developed and negotiated by Anishinabek Nation citizens, through the Restoration of Jurisdiction process. The ROJ process is facilitated by the Union of Ontario Indians secretariat. 23 First Nations signed the Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement and up to 17 more are considering signing on to the Education Agreement. The AES is wrapping up its third year of operations and by all reports is successful. It is important to note that the UOI has no on-going role in education self-government. There is an on-going relationship in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the AES and the UOI, to work together in unity.

The relationship between the Anishinabek Nation Government and the UOI will also be decided by the First Nations who sign the Governance Agreement and the UOI. After all, we are Anishinabek. Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe!