

**MULTICULTURAL HEALTH  
BROKERS COOP  
EDMONTON, ALBERTA**



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**BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY  
FOR RACIAL EQUITY**

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**BOARD MEMBER, MCHB COOP**

# WHO WE ARE



- We are a workers coop that provides community-based health education, early childhood and family support services to over 30 culturally diverse communities in Edmonton and area
- We have over 100 bicultural and bilingual workers called **cultural brokers**
- We work to enhance the health and well-being of families and nurture their efforts at building community so they could thrive, and actively contribute to their new homeland.

# WHAT DO WE DO

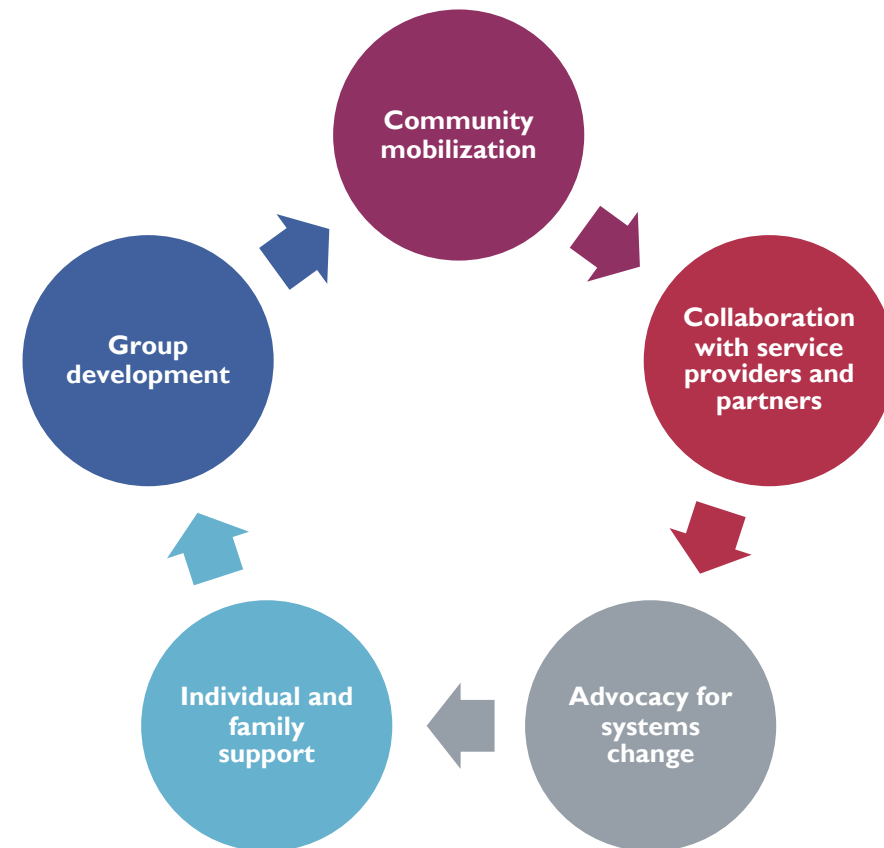
## Our Practice: Cultural Brokering

“the act of bridging, linking, mediating between groups of persons of differing cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict and producing change.”  
(Jezewski, 1999)

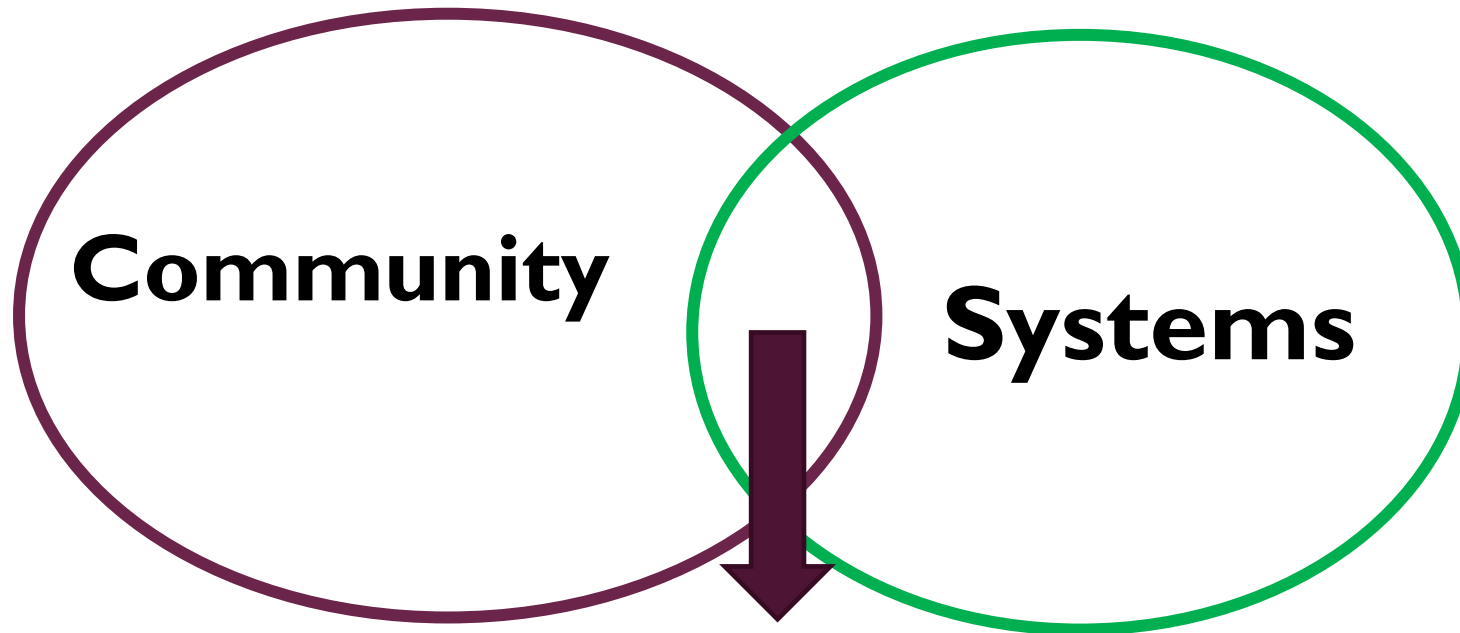
## Cultural Brokers

Bicultural and bilingual workers who come from the communities they serve and understands how the formal Canadian system works; in a unique position to bridge the gap between newcomer families and Canadian society.

## Five Spheres of Empowerment



# WHY CULTURAL BROKERING

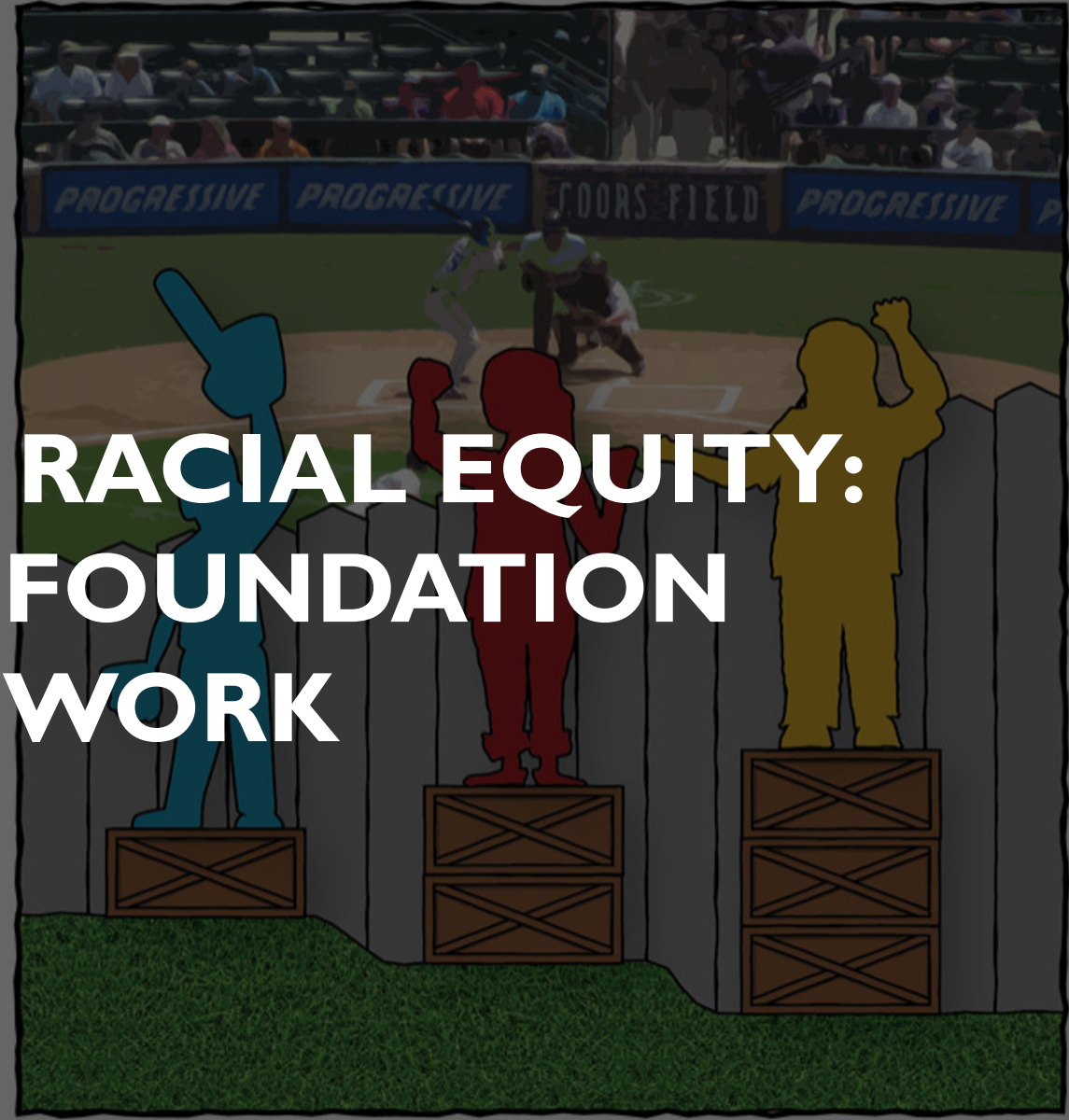


**The Third Space**  
**Cultural brokering and**  
**cultural brokers**



# ANTI-RACISM AND RACIAL EQUITY: THE ESSENTIAL FOUNDATION OF OUR WORK

**EQUALITY**



**EQUITY**

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them. (Center for Assessment and Policy Development)

# RACIAL EQUITY

# CONTEXT AND REALITIES OF OUR COMMUNITIES

- **Pre-migration history**
  - We come from colonized nations
  - We experienced trauma from countries at war or political turmoil
- **Inequities upon arrival**
  - Our prior skills and credentials are not recognized
  - We experience discrimination in employment, housing and education
- **Challenges to long-term inclusion and a sense of belonging.**
  - It takes us ten years before we earn as much as the Canadians.
  - We still need to have a voice and presence in public decision-making.

**We have cultural wealth!**



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# HARNESSING OUR CULTURAL WEALTH TOWARDS RACIAL EQUITY

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## Recruitment and hiring of cultural brokers

- Lived experience of inequities and cultural knowledge
- Essential skills and qualities
  - Workview – a strong sense of what is "just"
  - Power analysis – begin by asking why
  - Motivation – deliberate choice of working in the arena of social justice and change



**HARNESSING OUR  
CULTURAL  
WEALTH TOWARDS  
RACIAL EQUITY**

**Orientation and Training of cultural brokers**

- **Grounding concepts – systemic roots on inequities (from colonialism to racism)**
- **Understanding how the Canadian health and social system works within the context of power analysis**
- **Position cultural brokering as a practice and process to empower communities and build capacity for resilience and advocacy**
- **Awareness and understanding of the relationship between personal/lived experience and systemic causes**

**HARNESSING OUR  
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## **Advocacy**

- **Worked with a larger coalition of organizations to demand that Alberta Health Services collect race-based data to reveal racial inequities during COVID**
- **Presented an affordable housing proposal to City of Edmonton to reduce barriers to housing for racialized families**
- **Voice and presence in engaging systems for racial equity**
- **Provision of service regardless of status**
- **Participatory research to reveal inequity on housing, health , social services and impact on racialized populations**

QUESTIONS?