

# **ENHANCING IMMIGRANT YOUTH INTEGRATION THROUGH A SYNERGETIC APPROACH**

**NOVEMBER 25, 2024**

# INTRODUCTION



**SHERRY PARK**

**SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER**

**SHERRY.PARK@A4HC.CA**



**SARAH SMITH**

**STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT &**

**INCLUSIVE TRAINING DVLT**

**SARAH.SMITH@A4HC.CA**



**RAYYAH SEMPALA**

**YOUTH COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

**LIASION**

**RAYYAH.SEMPALA@A4HC.CA**

# AHC LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the spirit of respect and gratitude, we at AHC-Alberta acknowledge that we live and work within Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 territories, and the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 1, 2, and 4, the ancestral land, traditional meeting grounds, gathering places, travel routes and present day home for many Indigenous communities including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many other First Nations whose histories, languages, and cultures continues to enrich and influence our communities.

We are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the communities that have thrived in these treaty and ancestral lands. As an organization working towards improving peoples' well-being, we strive to learn, understand, and reframe our responsibilities to the land and community, as partners, neighbors and residents.

In the spirit of collaboration and building positive relationships with indigenous people, we are committed to fostering opportunities to educate staff, volunteers, and community members, about the lived experiences, resilience and ingenuity of the indigenous people.

# OVERVIEW

- Introduction – AHC Alberta
- AHC Youth Program approach
  - Empowering youth
  - Stakeholder engagement
  - Systemic changes
  - Discussion 1
- Youth as Catalysts for Change
  - Discussion 2

# ABOUT AHC ALBERTA

Action for Healthy Communities Society of Alberta (AHC Alberta), established in 1995, is a non-profit and charitable organization serving in the Greater Edmonton Metropolitan Region and multiple small and rural communities, municipalities and towns in Central and Northeastern Alberta.

## MISSION:

AHC is committed to working with all Albertans, facilitating targeted capacity building opportunities, particularly, supporting underserved, equity-deserving individuals and communities improve determinants of wellbeing that contributes to an enhanced quality of life.

## VISION

Active individuals and groups committed to using their skills, knowledge, culture, and values to build a stronger and healthier society.



# AHC PROGRAMS & SERVICES

- Healthy Children & Youth
- Settlement & Integration
- Strategic Workforce Integration & Entrepreneurship
- Adult Literacy & Skills Development
- Rural Small Centres
- Community Capacity Building
- Mental Health Supports

## WHERE WE SERVE



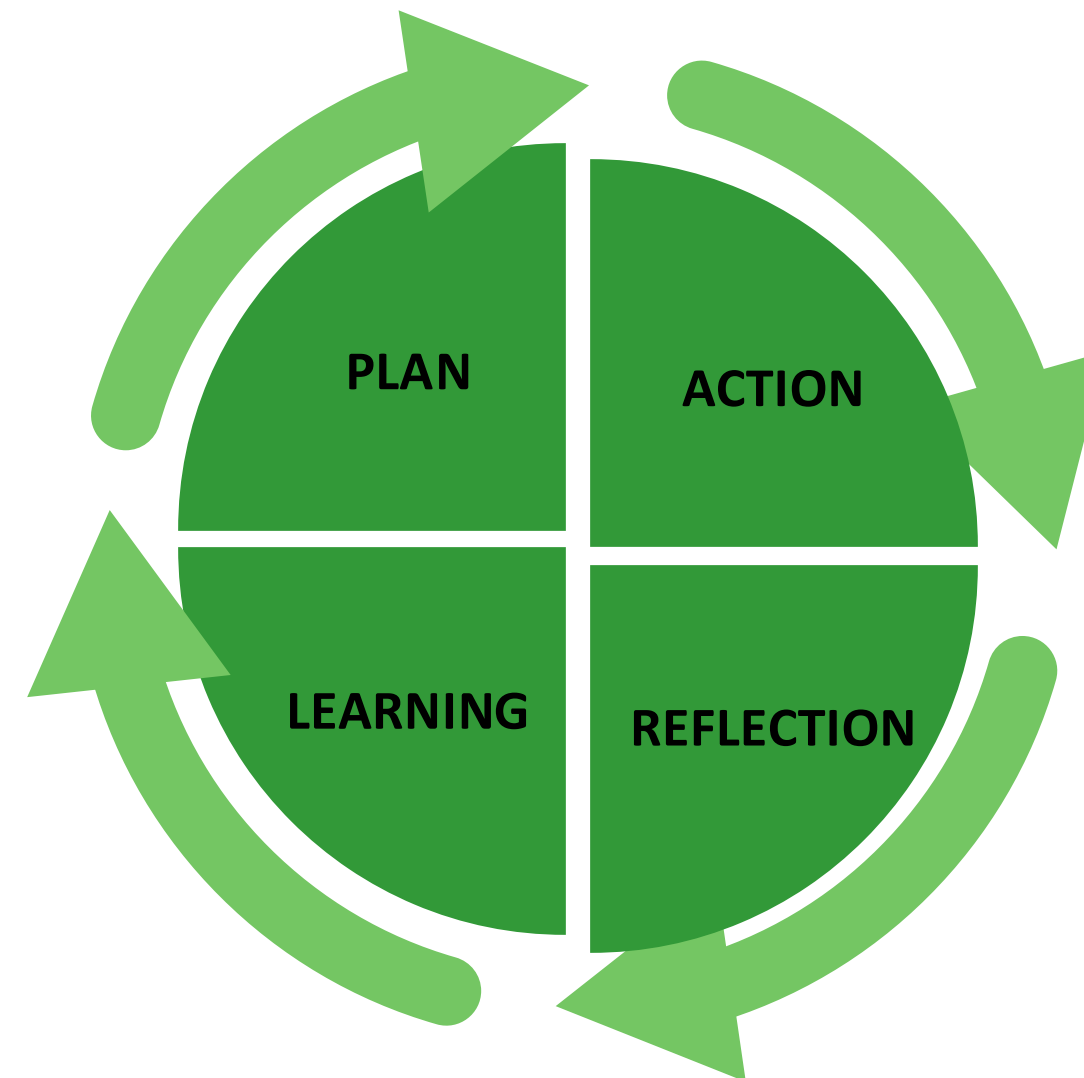
# OUR APPROACH AND PROCESS

## ABCD

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD):  
A strengths-focused framework that builds on the existing assets, talents, and capacities within communities.

By John McKnight

## PARL



# SERVICES

## Direct Youth Empowerment



## Parents & Families

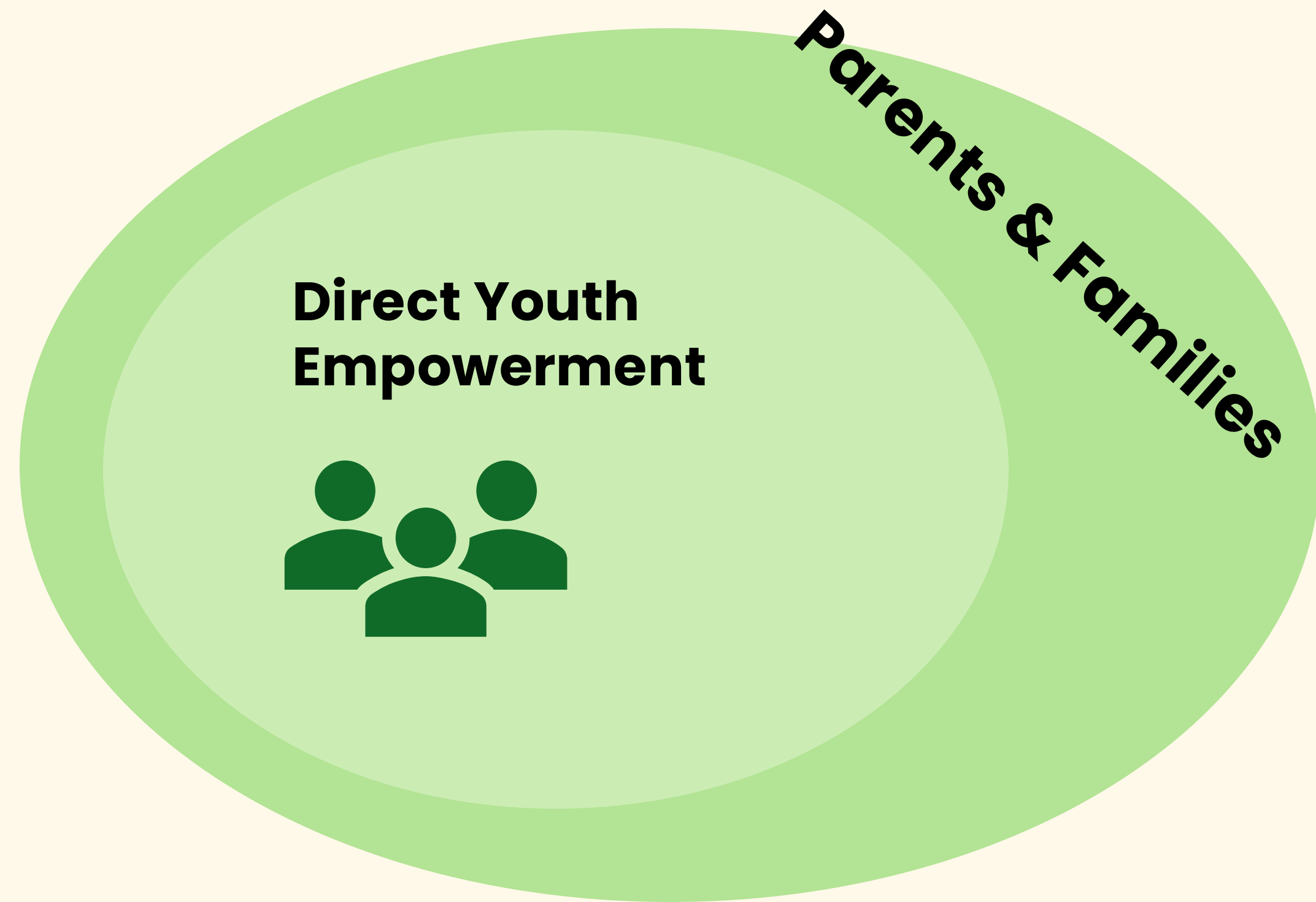
### Youth

- Information & orientation sessions
- Conversation circles
- Skills development sessions
- Leadership training
- Community Navigation
- Employment Support
- Referrals

### Parents & Caregivers

- Information and resources for raising healthy Children & Youth
- Parenting Challenges
- Network & Support group
- Empowering Caregivers

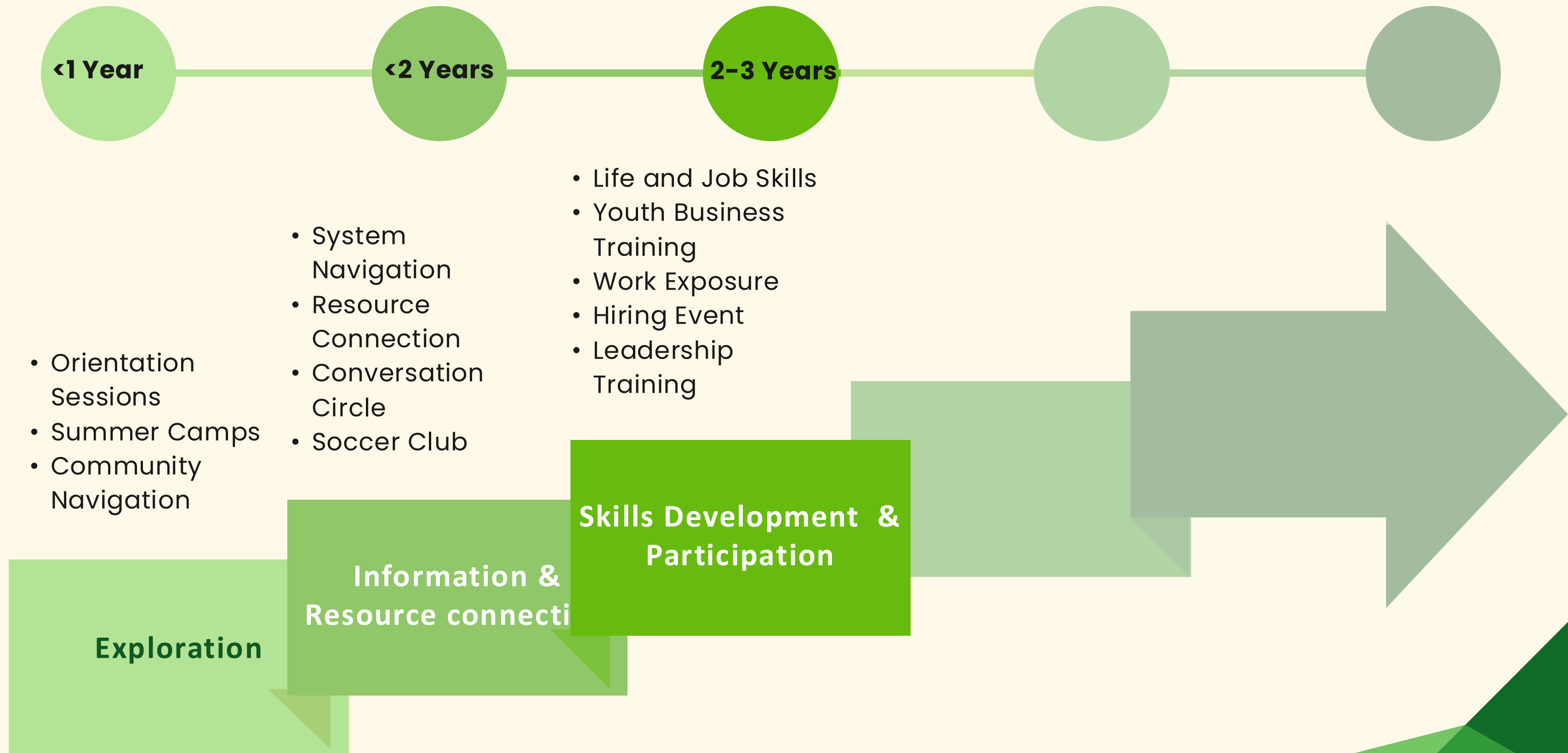




# PRIMARY FOCUS

- System Navigation
- Social Development
- Confidence Building
- Education Support
- Employment  
Readiness

# STAGES OF INTEGRATION

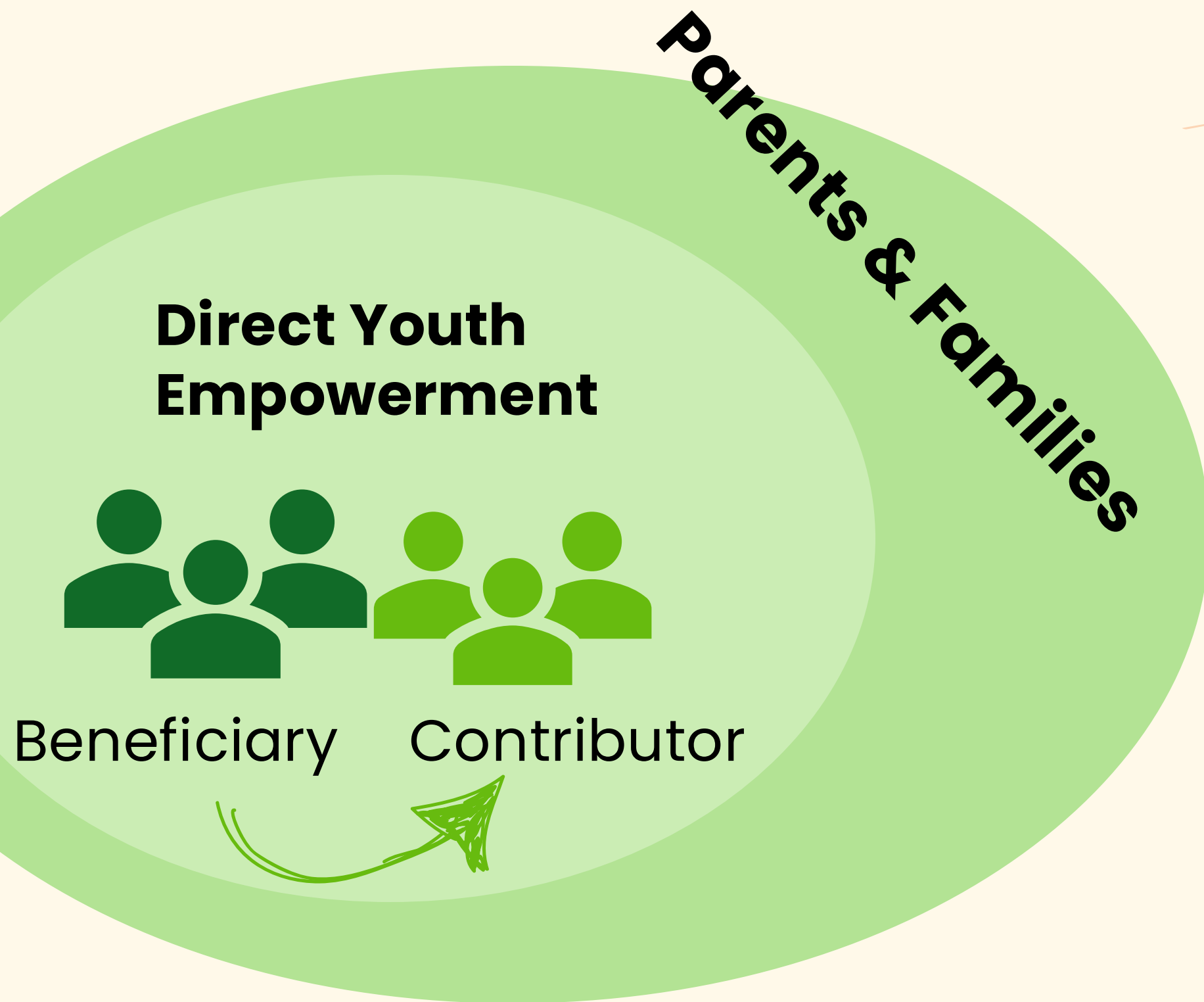


# ABCD APPROACH

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

- Enhance Civic Engagement
  - Develop Skills
  - Expand Meaningful Social Capital
  - Boost Sense of Belonging and Sense of Proud
- Youth as Active Agents of Change and Catalysts for Community Integration.

**Youth-led Community Initiatives**



# STAGES OF INTEGRATION



# GAPS




**Are there other barriers we don't know about?**

**Who else should take responsibility for addressing these barriers?**

- Lack of recognition for system impact & the barriers they create
- Racism and discrimination
- Complexity of navigating systems
- Barriers to extracurricular activities:
- Navigating socioeconomic obstacles
- Caregiving responsibility

Source: AHC evaluation, CRRF, Statistics Canada,

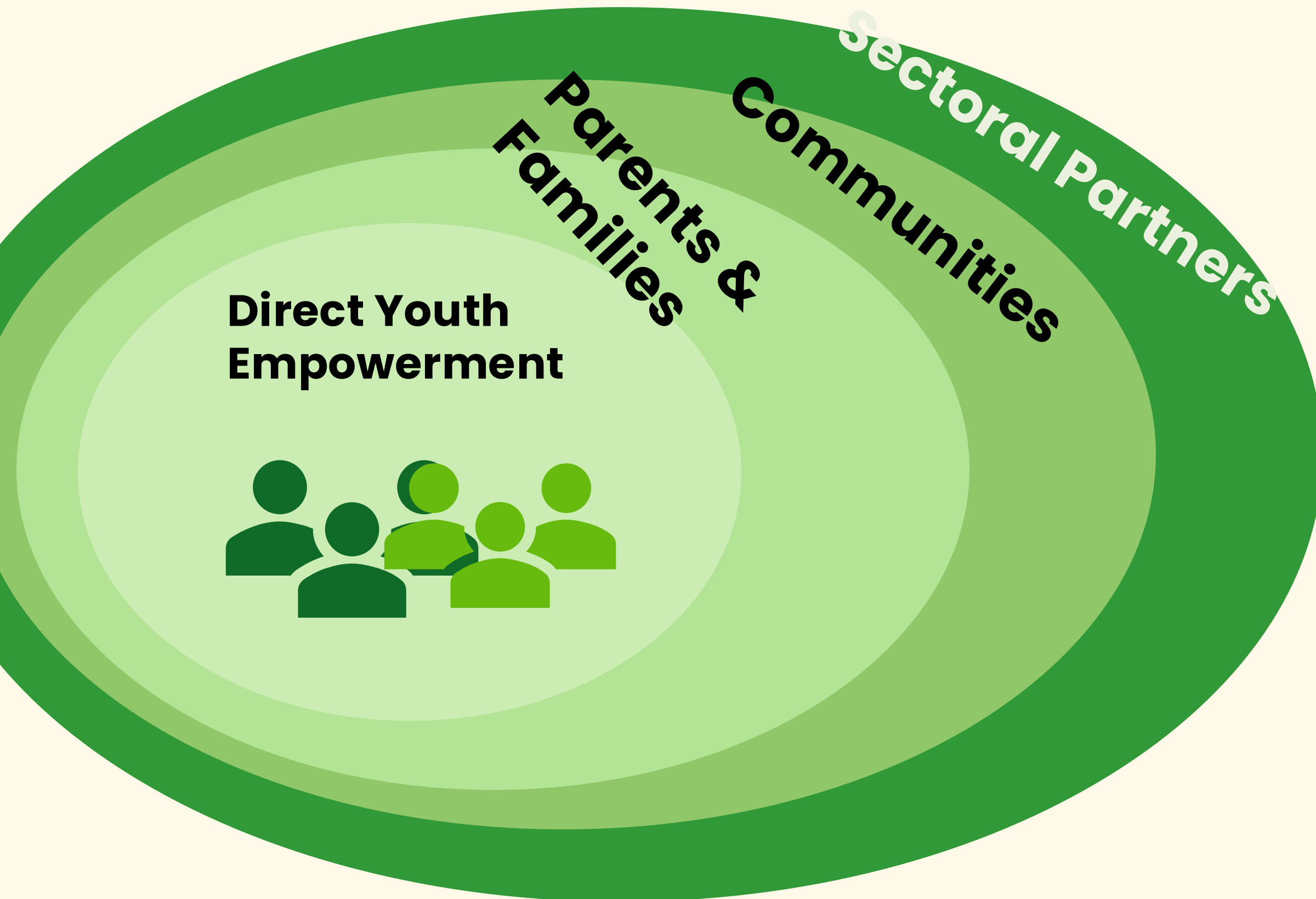


# INTEGRATION

Integration in Canada is a two-way street involving a commitment on the part of newcomers to adapt to life in Canada and on the part of Canada to welcome new people and cultures.

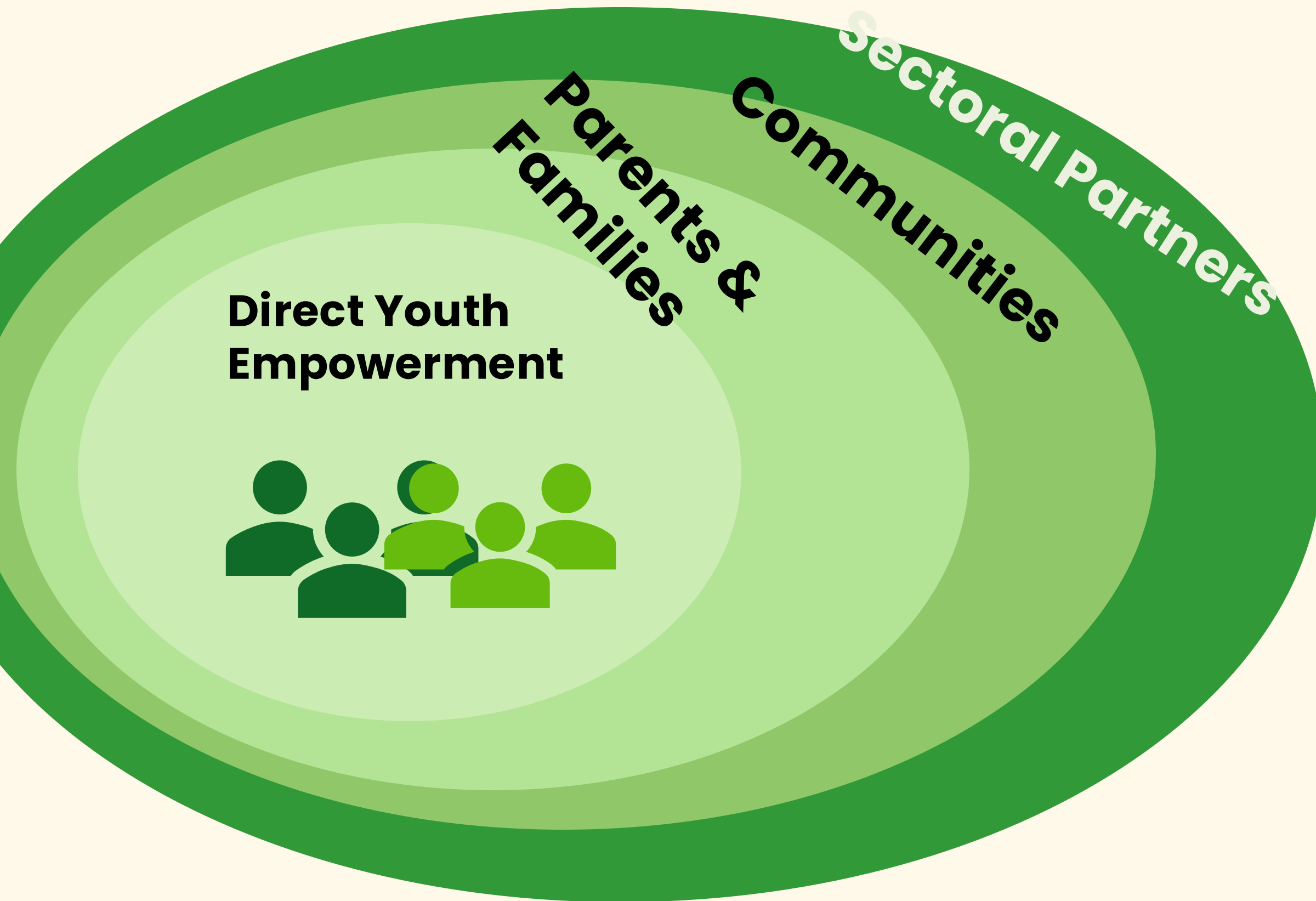
Government of Canada

# PROGRAMMING



- Raise awareness of challenges
- Cultural Competency Workshops
- Anti Racism Workshops
- Understanding of benefits for inter-sectoral collaboration and connection

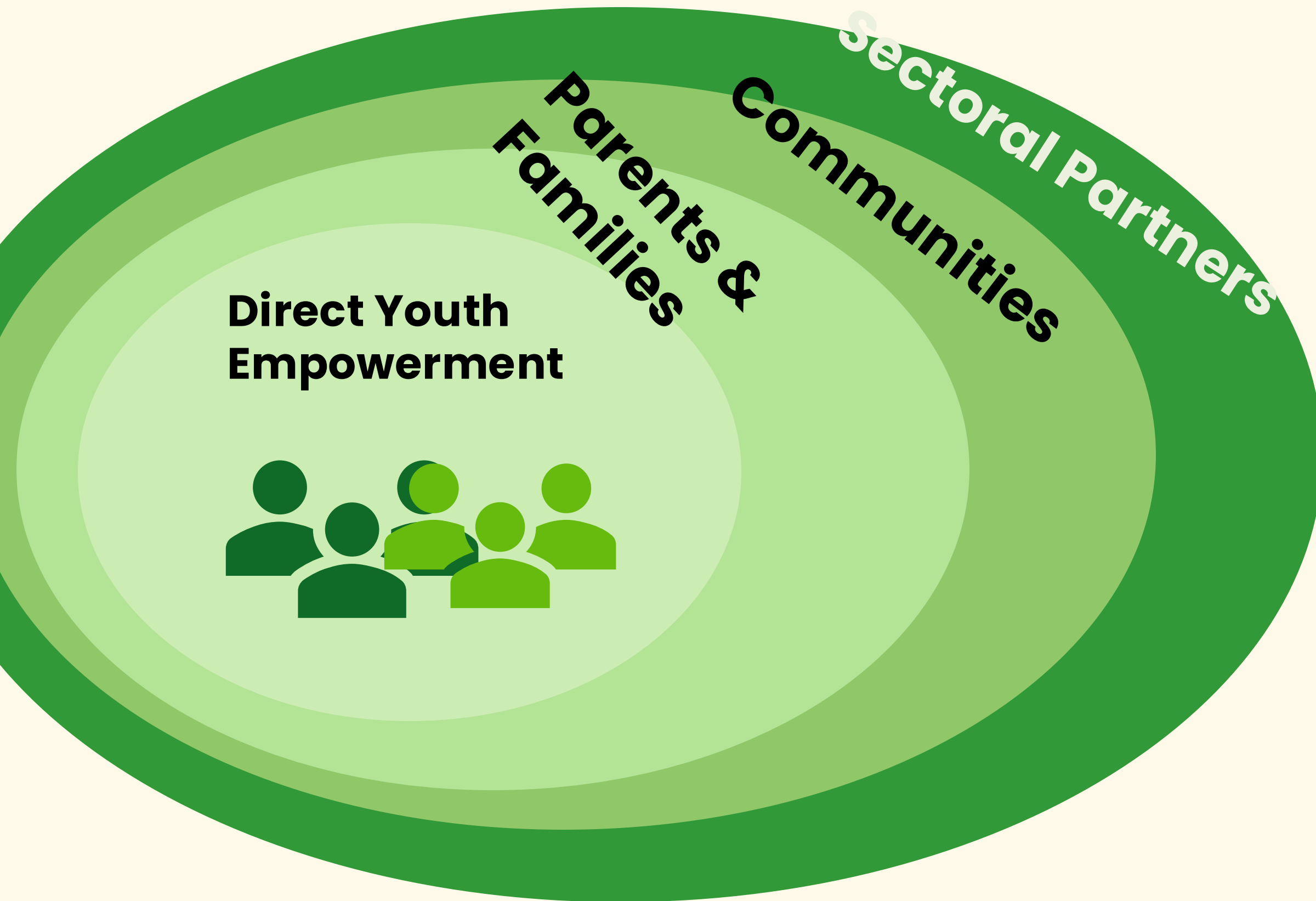
# PRIMARY FOCI



- Utilizing the knowledge developed through our youth programming & community building to
  - Educate stakeholders
  - Understand sector barriers
  - Connect underserved populations with the wider community

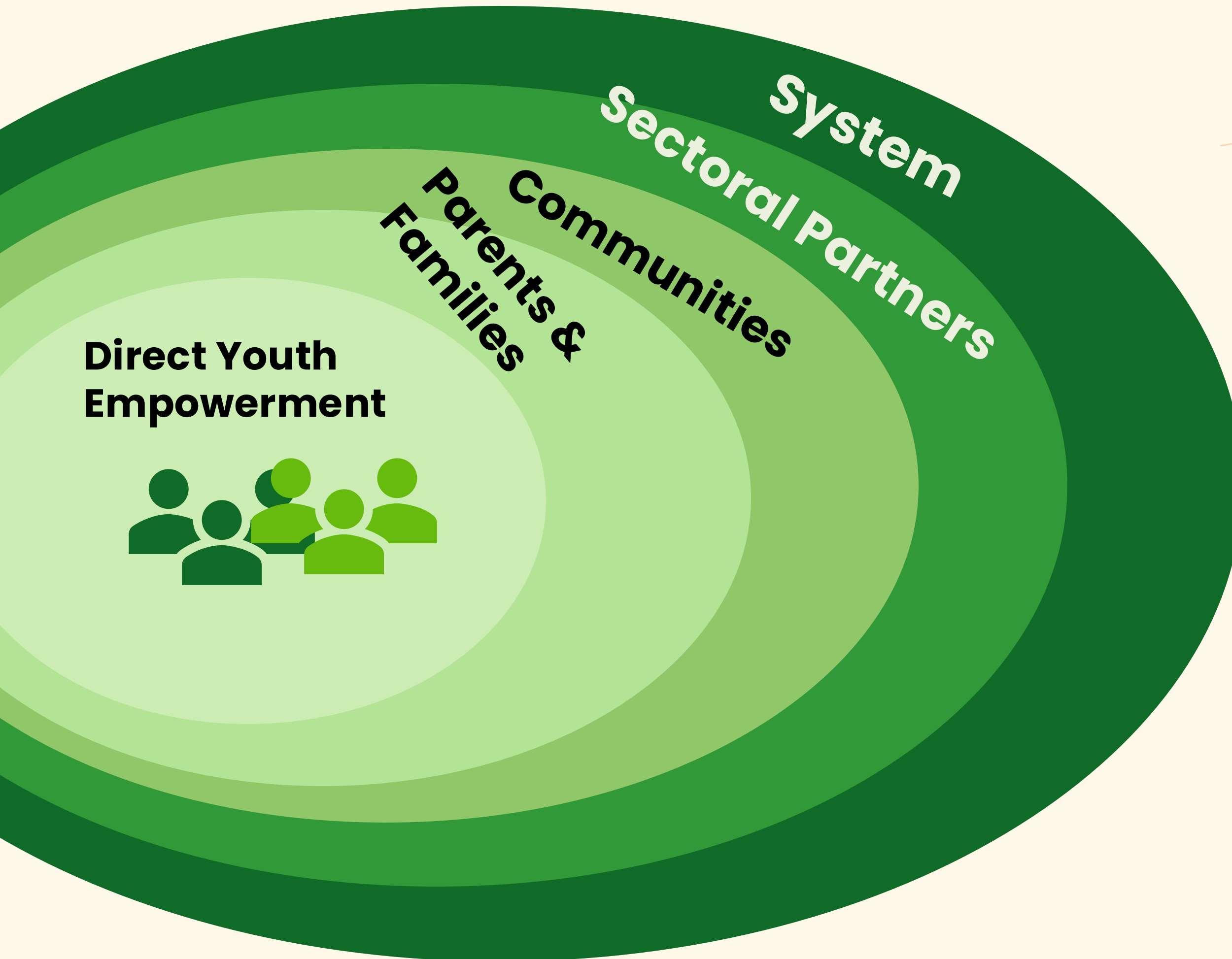


# GAPS



- **Are there other barriers we don't know about?**
- **Who else should take responsibility for addressing these barriers?**
- Lack of change within the structure of the system
  - Policies
  - Voices in leadership
  - Accountability

# PROGRAMMING



- Addressing systemic barriers and societal changes through:
  - Forums
  - Research on systemic barriers
  - EDI education
  - Public Awareness

# OUR ROLE AS A...

- Service Provider: Timely and Relevant Youth Support
- Supporter: Creating spaces for youth voices to be heard and their skills to be utilized
- Facilitator: Intersectoral Stakeholders to connect, build capacity and collaborate
- Contributor: Addressing systemic barriers

# YOUTH SOCIAL INTEGRATION : IN PRACTICE

## SPORT AS A MEANS OF IMMIGRANT YOUTH INTEGRATION

2015/16

DIRECT YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

### Newcomer Youth Interest:

- 2015/2016: After school sports, especially soccer



**Existing competitive  
soccer system in  
Edmonton**

### Existing known barriers:

- information
- financial support

But after supporting youth through those barriers we asked:

1. Why do they exist within the system?
2. Are there other barriers we don't know about?



# YOUTH SOCIAL INTEGRATION : IN PRACTICE

## SPORT AS A MEANS OF IMMIGRANT YOUTH INTEGRATION

2019–2022

FAMILIES & COMMUNITY

### Knowledge Acquisition

#### **Sport 4 Newcomers Initiative (2019–2020)**

##### **Commonwealth Sport Canada**

- **Try-it Sport Events**
- **Stakeholder Mapping**

#### **Participating in Art Sport & Society (PASS) Heritage Canada**

- **Community consultation sessions**
- **In-depth Academic Research with approval from the University of Alberta's ethics dept.**
- **Partnership development**
- **Sector Education**

# YOUTH SOCIAL INTEGRATION : IN PRACTICE

## SPORT AS A MEANS OF IMMIGRANT YOUTH INTEGRATION

2019-2022

FAMILIES & COMMUNITY

### Knowledge Acquisition

“

Athlete

Especially in the heat of games when things are getting pretty rough. I've heard things like slurs relating to my, my heritage or my race, though that would be the most, I guess, the ones that send up the most, the easiest ones to kind of remember.

”

“

I would go to the change room, and I would say - "good morning". And then he (the coach) would say, we Canadians, we don't say "good morning", we just say "morning". I think it wasn't unnecessary thing to say, as if that you just want to pick on somebody, right? That but more things other than good morning. Parent

”

# YOUTH SOCIAL INTEGRATION : IN PRACTICE

## SPORT AS A MEANS OF IMMIGRANT YOUTH INTEGRATION

2022-2023

COMMUNITY & SECTOR

### Knowledge Mobilization

Sector Education: Collective Action Forum

1. Learning from sport partners about their barriers & successes in working with diverse communities
2. Educating sport partners & others on the barriers of access to sport in the City of Edmonton, cultural competencies to develop, and how EDI can be implemented
3. Promoting spaces where all stakeholders can connect to learn & address barriers



# YOUTH SOCIAL INTEGRATION : IN PRACTICE

## SPORT AS A MEANS OF IMMIGRANT YOUTH INTEGRATION

2023–2024

SECTOR & SYSTEM

### Community Responsibility & Current Action

1. CAC partnership for Newcomer Coach Mentorship Project & research
2. Refereeing courses for newcomers by Alberta Soccer Association
3. Policy Education & Adjustment
4. Partners actively looking to diversify their staff
5. Sport community identifying service gaps within the City of Edmonton that disproportionately impact underserved communities (such as newcomers).





# YOUTH SOCIAL INTEGRATION : IN PRACTICE

## SPORT AS A MEANS OF IMMIGRANT YOUTH INTEGRATION

2023-2024  
SECTOR & SYSTEM

### Future Planning & Sustainability

#### Collective Action Forum:

- Community of Practice – bringing together all stakeholders to provide:
  - Community updates & barriers
  - Connections between stakeholders
- Continuation from the system:
  - Eventual driver of CAF to be the wider sport & newcomer communities



# **QUESTION 1**

**HOW DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION PARTNER WITHIN THE SECTORS THAT YOU WORK IN TO ADDRESS GAPS/BARRIERS FACED BY YOUTH? (WHAT SECTOR DO YOU THINK NEEDS FURTHER COLLABORATION?)**

# **YOUTH AS CATALYSTS: EMPOWERING IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

# AHC PRAXIS OF COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

AHC uses **strengths-based community approaches** to build capacity within community members and individuals.



**Community of practice events**

## **Capacity building workshops**



# AHC PRAXIS OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

## Targeted Youth Community Engagement:

Assets Based  
Community  
Development Model

+

Peer Mentor  
Model

=



Youth are experts



Community of practice

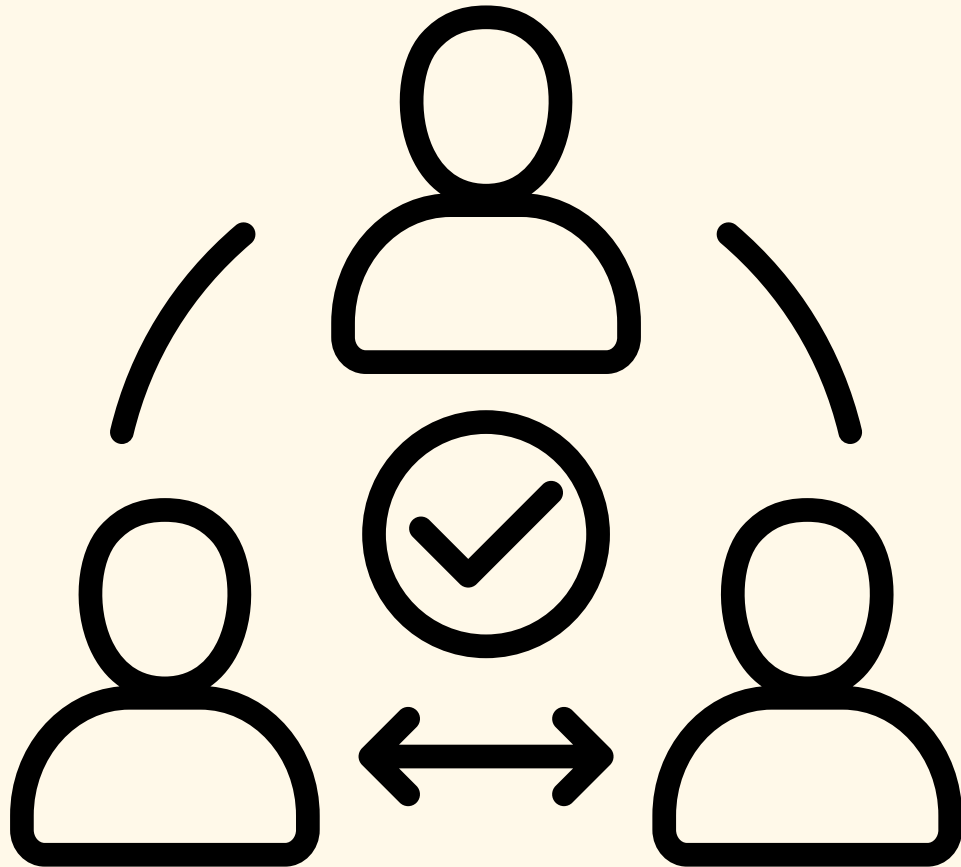


Catalyst



# AHC PRAXIS OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT: YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES

## Creation of a third space:



- **Asset of Place:**
  - Youth have a space where they can meet other newcomer/racialized youth
- **Asset of Culture and Stories:**
  - Youth reflect on the knowledge that resides within their own communities
- **Asset of Associations:**
  - Youth engage proactively with other youth and different community members

**ABCD and  
PEER MENTOR  
MODELS**

# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AS AN INTEGRATION TOOL

Youth gain social integration mechanisms such as:

- **Increased social capital** which positively affects their mental health outcomes (Nakhaie et al., 2022)
- **Positive patterns** of acculturation into Canadian culture as opposed to negative ones (Nakhaie et al., 2022)



**ETHNIC  
RESILIENCY**

*Ethnic resiliency* is "an individual's ability to achieve unusually good adaptation in the face of severe stress and/or the ability of the stressed person to rebound to the prestress level of adaptation." (Steinhauser, 1998; Campbell et al, 2016)

# ELYCA PROGRAM: **PROCESS**

YOUTH CONTIN  
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

01

**ENGAGEMENT  
SESSIONS**

**BENEFITS AND  
IMPORTANCE OF CIVIC  
ENGAGEMENT**

02

**YOUTH  
FORUM**

**DEEPER INSIGHTS  
ABOUT SOCIAL ISSUES  
AND INEQUALITY**

03

**YOUTH PROJECT  
PLANNING**

**PROJECT PLANNING,  
MARKETING,  
BUDGETING,  
PRESENTATION**

04

**YOUTH PROJECT  
IMPLEMENT**

**BUDGET MANAGEMENT,  
COMMUNICATION,  
OUTCOME MEASUREMENT**

05

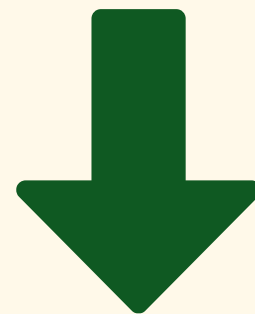
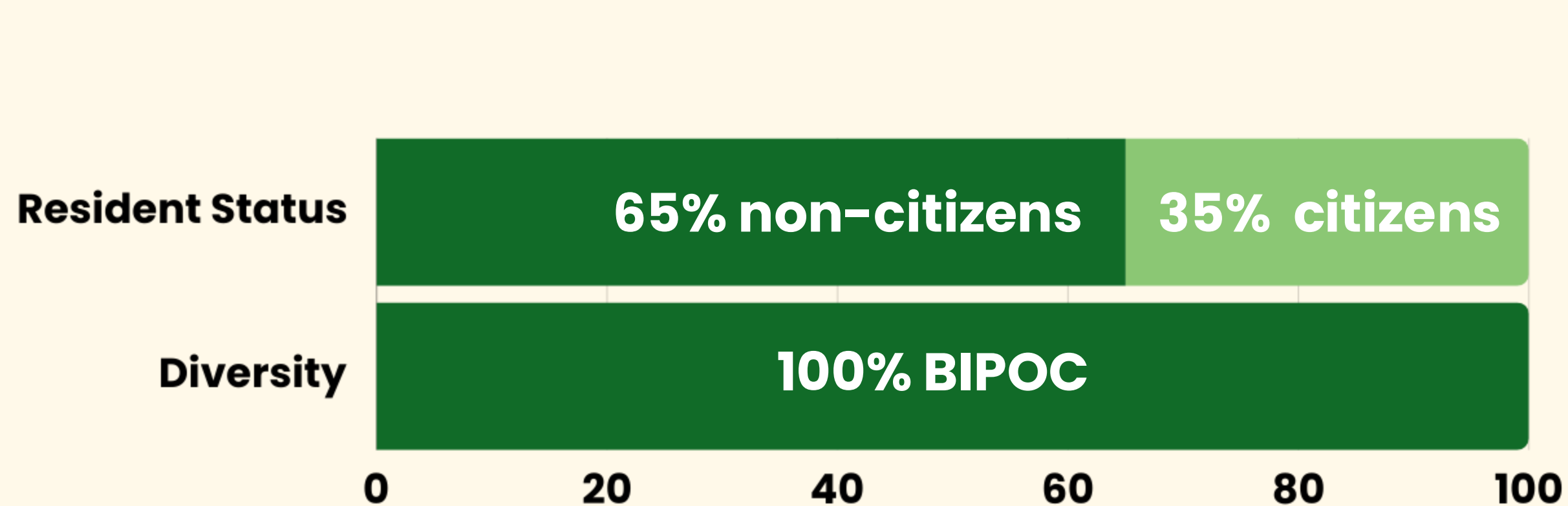
**IMPACT SHARING  
& SUSTAINABLE  
PLAN**

**OTHER RESOURCES,  
SUSTAINABLE  
STRUCTURE**





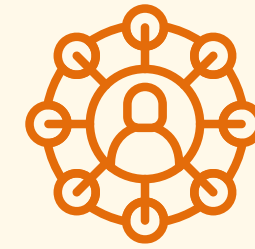
# KEY DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS & A PORTRAIT OF ELYCA 2023 YOUTH LEADERS



**ALL FIRST OR SECOND GENERATION IN CANADA**



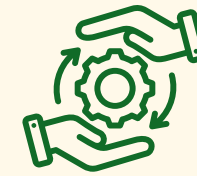
# ECO-SYSTEM OF SUPPORT



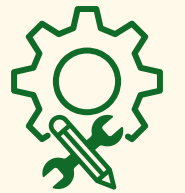
Stakeholder connections



Capacity building



Workshop



S



# YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES: EDUCATION AND CAREER PATHWAYS



**C.A.N INITIATIVE**



**EMCA**



**OSELYA**

# YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES: PHYSICAL WELLNESS



**EVEREST ALLEGIANCE**



**KYRGYZ YOUTH GROUP**



**GURKHAS SOCCER CLUB**

# YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES: COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



**SOBJAR YOUTH GROUP**



**OPERATION CFC**

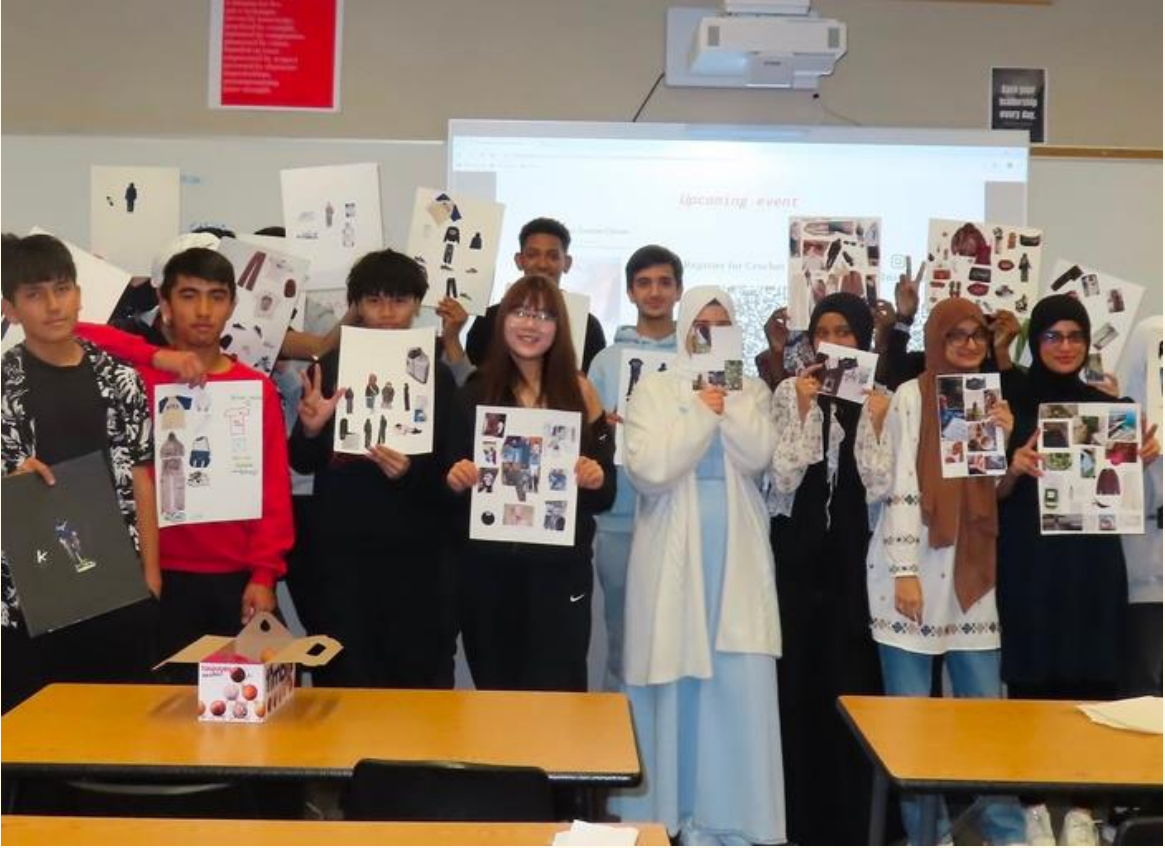


**FRESH START SPORTS**

# YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES: CREATIVE ENDEAVORS



**THE CAMELS**



**THE CREATIVE COLLECTIVES**



**METIS DOT ART**

# YOUTH REFLECTIONS:



# PROGRAM IMPACTS



**PERSONAL LEVEL**



**COMMUNITY LEVEL**





# PROGRAM IMPACTS



**PERSONAL LEVEL**



=

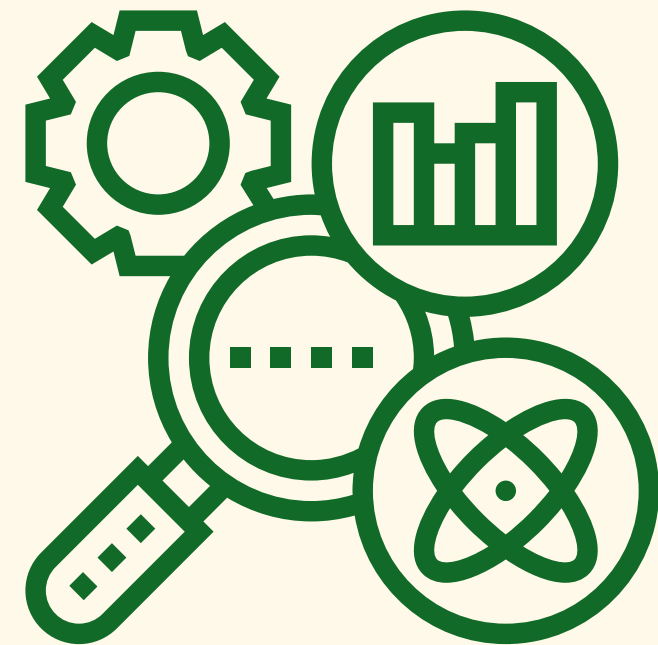
**SUSTAINABLE  
COMMUNITY IMPACT**



**COMMUNITY LEVEL**

# IMAGINING THE FUTURE OF YOUTH AS CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

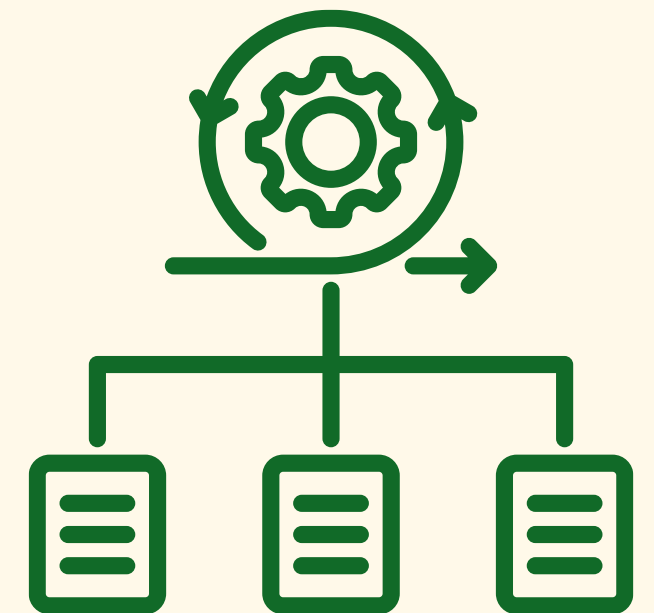
## COLLABORATION AND RESEARCH



## INTEGRATION STRATEGIES



## DECOLONIAL FRAMEWORKS



# REFERENCES

Campbell, G., Glover, T. D., & Laryea, E. (2016). Recreation, Settlement, and the Welcoming Community: Mapping Community with African-Canadian Youth Newcomers. *Leisure Sciences*, 38(3), 215–231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2015.1087896>

Chupp, M., Hirsch, J., & Malone, M. (2023). Integrating Asset-Based Community Development and Community-Based Research for Social Change: A Beginning. *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research & Engagement*, 16(2), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.5130/ijcre.v16i2.8968>

Close, S., & Lohr, C. (2023). Asset-Based Community Development in an Online Context: Crafting Collective Experience Into an Asset of Expertise. *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research & Engagement*, 16(2), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.5130/ijcre.v16i2.8684>

Gallucci A., Kassan A. (2019). “Now what?”: Exploring newcomer youth’s transition from high school to postsecondary education. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 53(1), 39–58.

Khanlou, N., Koh, J. G., & Mill, C. (2008). Cultural Identity and Experiences of Prejudice and Discrimination of Afghan and Iranian Immigrant Youth. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 6(4), 494–513. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-008-9151-7>

# REFERENCES

Lily Kaufmann, Integration in Canada: A systematic review of the youth experience, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Volume 84, 2021, Pages 52–64, ISSN 0147–1767, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.06.010>.  
(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0147176721000912>)

Nakhaie, R., Ramos, H., Vosoughi, D., & Baghdadi, O. (2022). Mental Health of Newcomer Refugee and Immigrant Youth During COVID–19. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 54(1), 1–29.  
<https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2022.0000>

Selimos E. D., George G. (2018). Welcoming initiatives and the social inclusion of newcomer youth: The case of Windsor, Ontario. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 50(3), 69–89.

Smith, D. J., Kassan, A. usha, Mudry, T. E., Mukred, R., & Goopy, S. (2021). Supporting Newcomer Youth Through the Process of School Integration in Canada: A Brief Report Highlighting Student Voices. *Canadian Journal of Counselling & Psychotherapy / Revue Canadienne de Counseling et de Psychothérapie*, 55(4), 484–496. <https://doi.org/10.47634/cjcp.v55i4.70692>

Smith, A. C. G., & Crooks, C. V. (2023). Youth-Identified Considerations for Programming to Support Newcomers' Healthy Development: A Group Concept Mapping Study. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 52(2), 489–507. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-022-09695-9>

Smith, A. C. G., Crooks, C. V., & Baker, L. (2023). “You Have to be Resilient”: A Qualitative Study Exploring Advice Newcomer Youth Have for Other Newcomer Youth. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 40(6), 761–771. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-021-00807-3>

# QUESTION 2

**WHAT ARE THE SYNERGIES WITHIN THE PROGRAMMING YOU HAVE FOR YOUTH AND HOW DO YOU ENSURE THAT THERE IS PROACTIVE/INTENTIONAL CONNECTION BETWEEN PROGRAMS?**

**HOW DOES YOUR PROGRAMMING EMPOWER YOUTH TO BE CIVICALLY ENGAGED?**