

National Cultural

BROKERS PROJECT

The Future of Cultural Brokering in Canada: A Changing Landscape

Who are We?

- 3-year IRCC-funded **national** project, 2022-2025
- Partners from across Canada
 - Umbrella Multicultural Health Brokers Coop, British Columbia
 - Multicultural Health Brokers Coop, Alberta
 - Laurentian University, Ontario
 - Manitoba Possible, Manitoba
- Project Activities:
 - National Research
 - Standardized Curriculum
 - Recognition for Cultural Brokers
 - Digital Learning Network (DLN)
 - Creation of a new organization
 - Regional & National Gatherings

What is Cultural Brokering?

The term Cultural Brokering describes the radically **human** practice of bridging between different cultural values and viewpoints and creating the space for something new to emerge. Cultural brokering creates the possibility for social change and transformation by nurturing new understanding, new meaning, and new ways of relating and being together.

Cultural Brokers stand in the gap where the most vulnerable newcomer families fall through the cracks of our current systems. Cultural Brokers resist a surface view of situations in favour of a deep contextual understanding of **lived realities**. They resist the rote process in favour of the development of **trusting relationships**.

To do cultural brokering work requires us to **fearlessly** embrace differences and fluidly move between them and stay in the space of always becoming something more.

Strengths of Cultural Brokering

Cultural Understanding: CBs possess lived experiences and in-depth knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures, aiding effective communication and integration.

Multilateral Mediation Skills: Ability to mediate between newcomers, immigration services and a wide range of community services, facilitating smoother interactions and advocacy.

Bridge Between Communities: Cultural brokers act as a bridge, fostering a sense of community between newcomers and the host society.

Challenges of Cultural Brokering

Limited Resources: Cultural Brokers face resource constraints, impacting their ability to effectively carry out their roles. Financial and training resources are the most significant ones.

Dependency of effectiveness: Depending on varying individual competencies and various training and support levels across different organizational contexts.

Lack of Recognition and Misunderstanding: There's a risk of exhibiting role biases, e.g., considering them as interpreters.

Background: Systems & Broader Structures

Canada's evolving immigration trends have created an increasingly ethnically diverse workforce, making cultural acceptability within communities a vital concern. The historical roots of Cultural Brokering in Canada, established through various legislative acts, underscore the importance of recognizing **Cultural Brokers as essential community resources**.

However, **economic and financial factors**, such as the prioritization of funding programs in immigration services and uncertainties in resource distribution, pose challenges, along with the need for non-monetary financial support for the workforce.

Background: Systems & Broader Structures

Regulatory and political factors also play a significant role, with the effective implementation of policies that support a culturally sensitive workforce being crucial, particularly amid the uncertainties of immigration policies.

Additionally, there is a pressing need for political commitment to **training and certification recognition**, ensuring that provincially developed programs are accessible and acknowledged at the federal level.

Background: Organization & Community Level

- Organizations and community-level arrangements significantly impact Cultural Brokers (CBs) occupation, particularly through **human resource management policies**.
- The **demand for CBs often exceeds supply**, with a shortage of full-time positions leading to high turnover.
- Multiple part-time CBs are employed without adequate HR mechanisms to recognize their competencies, such as education, experience, language skills, and **mentoring potential**.
- Remuneration consistency, including fair pay and access to benefits like insurance and pensions, is crucial, as are retention factors like training, career progression, and access to essential resources for **safe and effective work**.

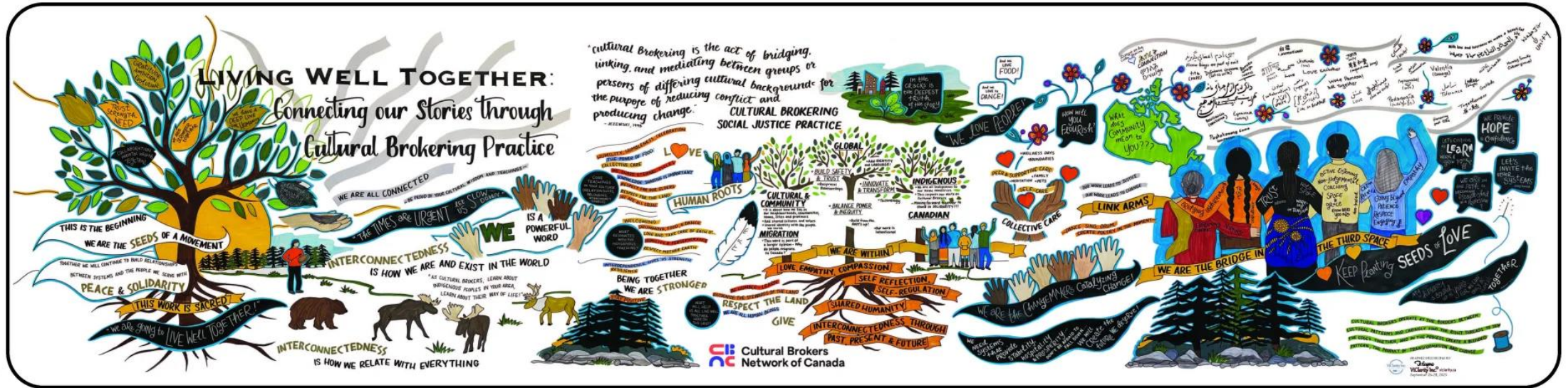
Background: Organization & Community Level

- Leadership commitment is vital but can be **inconsistent** due to management changes, resulting in variable support
- Additionally, managers may struggle with **advocating for resources** and engaging with policymakers, which is necessary to ensure the role of CBs is recognized and safeguarded within interprofessional dynamics.
- Clear job descriptions, defined scopes of practice, and **informing other professionals about the CB role** are essential to avoid overloading CBs with inappropriate tasks.
- Finally, the lack of a **comprehensive database** and data collection strategy within and across organizations hinders the effective management and support of CBs, emphasizing the need for improved data tracking of their activities and client interactions.

Questions?

1. What do you see as the **long-term vision** for Cultural Brokering Practice in Canada, and how do we measure success?
2. How can we better **define and standardize** the role of Cultural Brokers across different regions to ensure consistency and effectiveness?
3. What **training and professional development** opportunities are essential for the growth and sustainability of Cultural Brokers?
4. How can Cultural Brokers play a more significant role in addressing **systemic racism and promoting equity** within Canadian society?
5. What strategies are needed to secure **sustainable funding** and ensure the financial accessibility of Cultural Brokering services across Canada?

Thank You!



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The concept of **Cultural Brokering** is centered on promoting inclusive practices and bridging differing cultural values to advance knowledge and drive social change. This approach emphasizes gaining a profound contextual understanding of lived realities and is aligned with DEI and JEDI principles.

Cultural Brokering is increasingly recognized as a fundamental approach within the evolving narrative of Canada. However, the specifics of its implementation and the mechanisms for its realization remain open questions.

We invite you to participate in our discussion to explore the potential impact of this practice at local and regional levels and envision what this process might entail.