

Edmonton Multicultural Coalition

2022-2023 Annual Report

Message from the President – Dr. HM Ashraf Ali
Edmonton Multicultural Coalition Association

I am honoured to be part of the Edmonton Multicultural Coalition Association (EMCA) as the President of the Board of Directors in 2023. In the past three months, as EMCA Board President, I have had the opportunity to contribute and steer the Board and Organization to achieve its mission to build a strong and vibrant ethnocultural community in Edmonton.

Notable Achievements:

Mission statement, Strategic plan, EMC Bylaws and Core Program:
The revised and member-approved Mission statement **"Through civic engagement, foster multicultural and socio-economic integration for the reciprocal benefit of Edmontonians."** is now available on Coalition's website.

In 2022, we worked on developing the EMCA's Strategic Plan 2023-2025. The EMCA Bylaws, last updated in 2014, were reviewed; the amended and approved bylaws are effective as of February 28, 2023.

The Coalition continued to successfully implement the Community animator model, the FCSS-funded core program All Together Now. Through this program, community animators develop Leadership and community development skills, build capacities, and connect and mobilize their community members. One success story of the animators was a successful collaboration with the City of Edmonton to review the C529 Policy.

In 2023, the Board successfully created Fundraising and Fund Development Committee, Financial Committee, Membership, and Community Engagement Committee to strengthen Board Governance and the activities of the Coalition.

This year's feature was our member's meeting and Civic Engagement in May 2023, just before the May Provincial elections. The invited candidates from different political parties shared their political agendas and answered some pointed questions from the audience. The Coalition's General Secretary, Giselle General, shared important information about various ways to engage in Elections, urging people to exercise their voting rights, one of our crucial civic duties.

Although the funding situation is unpredictable, the Board is happy to mention that with our Executive Director, Dr Mitali Banerjee's consistent efforts, we increased our funding by 70% over last year. New funders, the Canadian Park and Recreation Association (Youth Leadership sports initiative), Anti-Racism Community Engagement Grant, and partners, Edmonton Federation of Community Foundation (EFCL), are some who joined us in our journey. We are grateful to our current funders, FCSS and the City of Edmonton, for CIOG and EIRC grants and their continued support. The Board wants to thank the Executive Director for these great efforts in establishing new partnerships and securing funding.

Challenges and Plans for Next Year:

Government funding is becoming more challenging because of the changing Local, Provincial, and Federal Governments' funding policies. Like all other organizations, we are impacted too by the policy changes of the Governments.

The Board anticipates funding challenges in the coming months, primarily because of the funding cuts and the changing political scenario. High inflation or a possible recession can affect the operations of the Coalition. Considering such situations, the Board is exploring opportunities, including fundraising campaigns. In addition, the Coalition has successfully continued to build partnerships with Greater Edmonton Alliance for fundraising.

We urge you to support us by joining our Organization and generous regular donations.

I want to thank each member of the Board for their valuable time, unconditional support, and contributions to making important decisions for the Coalition. Thanks to the members, staff, volunteers, funders, donors, and partners for your support and encouragement.

The Coalition is a great multicultural organization and will grow in leaps and bounds with your continued generous support.

Message from the Executive Director – Mitali Banerjee (Ph.D)

"Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle."
- Napolean Hill

The Edmonton Multicultural Coalition Association had another eventful and busy year. Opportunities for this year and next looks promising for continued partnerships, building new ones, and encouraging us to work with Edmonton's ethnocultural communities.

All Together Now, our core program funded by Family and Community Social Services (FCSS) continues to engage aspiring leaders from ethnocultural communities to build their Leadership and community-building capacities through our Animator model.

I am thrilled and proud of their efforts, dedication, and passion for their communities. Our animators secured $33,250 (last year) and $4750 (this year) from local, Municipal, and Federal funders to mobilize community members and do community work. This is a significant organizational achievement. This is just one of the many ways demonstrating the community animator model is very effective. Its positive impact is evident not only with the current animators but for those who apply the skills they learned many years after moving on from our program.

Another important achievement of the Animators was their participation and successful delivery of key Community engagement messages to review the City of Edmonton's Policy C529 to facilitate greater participation of newcomers in our social, cultural, economic and political systems.

We have also provided opportunities for community members to engage socially and in Civic matters, such as Provincial Candidate Forum this year and Mayor Forum in partnership with Greater Edmonton Alliance last year.

The Coalition has been steadily diversifying the funder pool to promote programs that align with Coalition's Mission. Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA), will support youth from the McCauley neighbourhood to participate in Youth leadership through soccer. Telling Stories Together: Youth Lens is another program funded by Emerging Immigrant and Refugee Communities Grant (EIRC). Igniting Impact received substantial funding of $100,000 to promote the Coalition by enhancing, strengthening, and sustaining effective practices that will improve Organizational capacities. Igniting Impact will address technological gaps and build resilience by modernizing the Organization. With all the new funding, we increased our revenue by 70% over last year.

Although we are achieving program goals and outcomes, diversifying funding and programs, fundraising and building new partner relationships, none of the programs is multi-year, putting a great deal of strain on the operations of the Organization, including staff turnover.

I urge all here attending today to support us by donating generously and becoming a member of the Organization so that we can continue the work for our communities and you can appreciate the value of your contribution, grow and make meaningful changes in the communities we work with so passionately.

I also want to acknowledge and thank the Coalition board, members, community mentors and staff for all your support. The Coalition would also like to thank Councillor Keren Tang, who has taken time from her busy schedule to attend our AGM.

Finally, our programs could not have been delivered without the generous support from our funders and donors.

Thank you all.

Mitali Banerjee.

Our Vision

A strong, vibrant community strengthened through equitable and reciprocal social integration.

Our Mission

Through civic engagement, foster multicultural and socio-economic integration for the reciprocal benefit of Edmontonians

Objects:

To promote racial and ethnic equality by:

- Providing capacity-building activities to help disadvantaged ethno-cultural communities overcome social exclusion, develop skills to solve problems, and act collectively to improve their lives and local conditions, including adult literacy and language instruction, skills training, and workshops;
- Educating the general public about the culture, history, and traditions of ethnocultural communities and increase the public's understanding and awareness about Racism and ethnoracial disparities through workshops, seminars, roundtable discussions, and public forums.

EMCA Housed on Traditional Land of Treaty 6 Territory
EMCA acknowledges the diverse Indigenous peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries, such as Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Nakota Sioux, Metis and Inuit.

Incredible Animators of the Coalition!

Animators are our Community champions and our lifeline. The Coalition currently has seven animators from Syria, Nepal, Liberia, China, Chad, the Philippines and Eritrea/ Ethiopia and are part of our **All Together Now (ATN) Program** funded by **Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)**. Community animators are the link and catalysts who sensitize members of their respective communities on issues that concern them collectively. They use their skills and talents to mobilize people to act on issues that affect them and bridge the gap between immigrants and the establishment.



Success Stories:

When someone has a project idea, one of the most common obstacles is securing operational resources to make it a reality. In addition, applying for funding can be intimidating, especially for anyone who may still be adjusting to life in Edmonton and may not be familiar with the grant-writing process.



Last year, the Coalition animators focused on writing grants as one of the capacity-building activities. This activity honed their leadership skills, and they seized the opportunity and successfully acquired funding to support their communities. The Coalition provided the animators with a safe platform to collectively brainstorm project ideas and execute them as a team, including the Culture Day event they accomplished with pride consecutively for two years. The animators welcomed the opportunity and challenged themselves with this hands-on grant-writing activity. Collectively, Priyanka Sharma (Nepal), Yagmur Karagold (Turkey), Tarik Dafla (Eritrea/Ethiopia and Abdi Siad Omar (Somalia) secured $28,250 to do the work in their communities. This achievement would not have been possible without the tireless contribution of the Coalition Mentors, Dr. Abu Conteh (Sierra Leonne), Deepak Lama (Nepal), Sim Senol (Turkey) and Tigist Dafla (Eritrea/Ethiopia). As leaders of the community, they inspired their communities and our Animators.

Also, it's incredible to see long-time supporters and past animators of the Coalition share their time and expertise to mentor animators to gain the skills to succeed.

Community Engagement:

Coalition animators successfully organized and facilitated focus group sessions to review and update the City of Edmonton's Immigration and Settlement Policy C529 (2007). This was an excellent experience for the animators.

Mian Wang (China), Amna Zafar (Pakistan), Sabrina Gebreyesus (Eritrea), Simran Gulati (India), Abdi Omar (Somalia), Alejandra Diaz Flores (Mexico), Nicole Nebril (Philippines), Salamane Yameogo (French/Francophone), Priyanka Sharma (Nepal), and Martha Sellu (Sierra Leone) teamed up with community members for the SIS – Year Two and accomplished that task.



Aha, moments!

The animators are very appreciative of the capacity-building opportunities provided to them. Here are some quotes from them:

Priyanka Sharma (Nepal):

"The process of writing a grant gave me an experience of a rich, intercultural cultural teamwork whereby I learned strategies by observing people at work and their approaches specific to their cultural contexts. The celebration of the Culture Days together with different ethnic communities was very enriching as the values of equity, diversity and inclusion were put to practice in real-time and space.

The Coalition provided me with good support. We got city grants via Coalition to conduct activities within our communities, like the SIS project and culture days participation. These activities helped build community engagement and facilitated further planning of future programs. The Coalition provided a platform for collaboration and partnerships with other communities within Edmonton. This has shaped a lot of our programs going forward."

Martha Sellu (Sierra Leone):

"With EMC as a backbone to help me with my leadership skills. Yes, EMC has helped me to be more independent and gained confidence with my community work."

"My work with the community as a Community Animator has been rewarding and fulfilling, and this has helped me improve my leadership skills, my relationships with my community members and my communication skills. I was a good listener, but working with my community has also made me an active listener. My cultural competence has also improved through my interaction of different other Animators from different cultures. I am more patient than I was. I also had the chance to advocate for members as well. All these skills have strengthened my professional commitment to work with my team and my community."



Yagmur Karagold (Turkey):

"I did not know how to write a Budget, but thanks to the Coalition for patiently teaching me and walking the process with me."

Fundraising Partnerships empower us:

EMCA and **Greater Edmonton Alliance (GEA)** are entering their second year of partnership to raise funds for respective organizations. This year we will flaunt a Silent Auction and a three-month fundraising campaign to support some of our operational costs and programs.

EMCA and Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues are partnering on Creating Intercultural/Anti-Racism Dialogues in Edmonton Community Leagues. Bent Arrow, Ribbon Rouge and Sisters Dialogue and the Coalition will engage in a one-year project to support an anti-racist framework, working with Community Leagues to assist in representing more groups in neighbourhoods and running a pilot project with six to eight Leagues where the organizations will model program and event development through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion. Partners will collaborate on innovative and transformative anti-racism and intercultural experiential learning for Community Leagues throughout the city and support the creation of anti-racism policy statements and action plans to become more inclusive spaces. The Coalition will bring ethnocultural games like Carrom, Kho Kho or sungka and other exciting games to the Community Leagues. Everyone can play these games and come TOGETHER, join in conversations to build meaningful and lasting relationships with neighbours and exchange culture through games, irrespective of their ethnicity, origin or colour of their skin.

Leaders of tomorrow:

Animator Leadership development workshops: We hosted a series of six Capacity Building and Community Development workshops for the animators. Salamane Yameogo facilitated these workshops: Enhancing community leadership skills, Becoming an effective communicator, Developing cultural readiness, Becoming an effective community animator, Fostering community engagement, Cultivating public speaking skills and Self-confidence. And one session for practicing their skills.



Celebrations:

We celebrated two days of Culture Days in 2022 by **Bridging Communities through Language & Literature**, centering on the Organization's vision.

This project was a part of the larger initiative at EMCA to collate various ethnic voices and trace the ever-changing cultural landscape of Alberta. The event brought together - Turkish, Ethiopian/Eritrean, Nepalese, Bengali, Mexican, Somalian and Sierra Leone animators to share the stories of their journey in Canada through various art forms dance, music, painting, and storytelling. The EMCA Community Animators facilitated the planning, designing, and executing of the event, which also contributed to the capacity building of the animators.











A step towards building an Anti-Racist community:

"Colourblind Voice of Racism: Ripple Effects and Possible Solutions" was a collaboration between EMCA and the Centre for Research Innovation and Development Action (CRIDA) and concluded in January 2023.

We facilitated focus group engagement sessions to address racial inequality, systemic barriers and challenges newcomer immigrant populations face. We believe the discussion at the engagement session will be significant in realizing the impacts of Racism and developing anti-racism strategies by the Government.

Members Meeting and Civic Engagement:





The Coalition held a Candidate Forum in May 2023 as part of our Civic Engagement initiative. The invited Candidates engaged in proactive conversations with the audience.

Elections Alberta shared information regarding Elections for the benefit of the members. In addition, our Secretary, Giselle General, also voiced the value of election engagement roles, even if one is not a Citizen.

Actions this Summer:

- Building leaders together through Soccer (BYLTTS) is an extension of the Coalition's free Annual Community BBQ and Soccer Tournament held for three consecutive years from 2017-2019.
- This summer, BYLTTS is celebrating community building that recognizes and honours the ethnic diversity within the McCauley neighbourhood. Residents (multicultural, mainstream and Indigenous) who experience social and economic disadvantage will feel welcome and safe to participate in a sports activity that celebrates diversity, promotes equitable access and builds leadership capacities of youth through soccer.





Telling Stories Together:

Youth Lens:

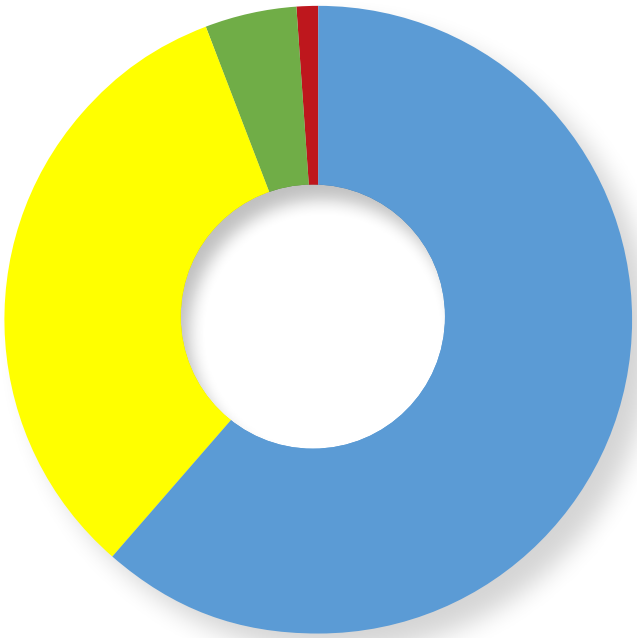
Telling Stories Together: Youth Lens aims to build the capacities of youth from diverse communities (ethnocultural and mainstream) through the art of writing stories that have affected them profoundly and then vocalizing them in front of an audience. Through this project, we attempt to bring youth from ethnocultural and mainstream communities to come together and address Racism, encouraging both parties to heal and create a lasting and positive connection allowing them to take a step towards living a life in Canada free from the spectre of Racism.

The show will be on July 15 at The Grindstone Studio.



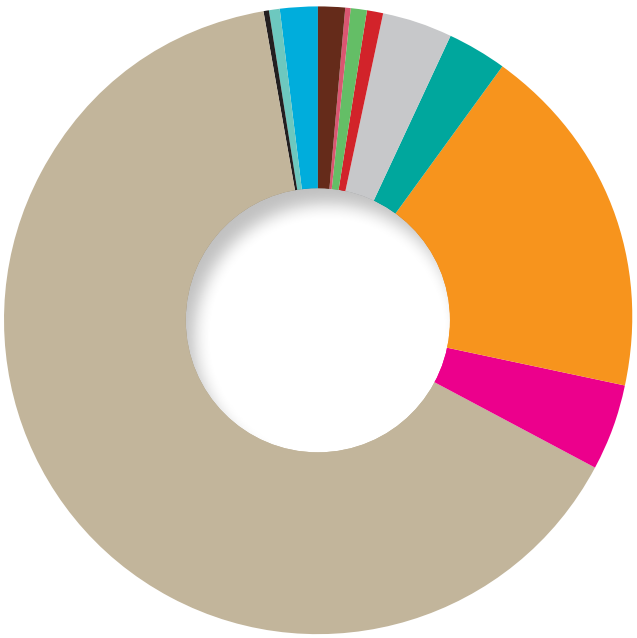


2022 FINANCIAL REPORT



Revenue

FCSS grant (Schedule 1)	$ 167,691
Grants and other funds	$ 89,152
Contracted services	$ 12,222
Other income	$3,002
Total Revenue	**$ 272,067**



Expenses

Advertising and promotion	$488
Amortization	$3,224
Interest and bank charges	$726
Donations	$161
Honurarium	$1,958
Insurance	$1,635
Office	$9,404
Professional Fees	$7,000
Program Expenses and Supplies	$45,104
Rental	$10,977
Salaries and Benefits	$157,811
Telephone and Utilities	$1,017
Transportation	$960
Volunteer Expenses	$300
Website Admin & Maintenance	$4,282
Total Expenses	**$ 245,047**
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	**$ 27,020**

Our Key Funders (2022-2023)

Alberta Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women

Alberta Trade, Immigration and Multiculturalism

Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA)

Community Initiatives Program (CIP), Alberta Government

City of Edmonton (COE)

Community Investment Operating Grant (CIOG)

Emerging Immigrant and Refugee Communities Grant (EIRC)

Family and Community Social Services (FCSS)

OUR KEY PARTNERS (2022-2023)

EDMONTON CHAMBER OF VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION (ECVO)
EDMONTON INTERCULTURAL CENTRE (EIC)
EDMONTON FOUNDATION OF COMMUNITY LEAGUES (EFCL)
GREATER EDMONTON ALLIANCE (GEA)
JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES EDMONTON (JFSE)
WE AND THE WORLD CENTRE (WAW)

Who We Are

2022 - 2023 Board of Directors

Dr. HM Ashraf Ali, President
Giselle General, Secretary
Lawrence Florkiah, Treasurer
Nancy Elbenhawy, Public Relations Officer
Hansa Thalesvar, Member at large
Abdul Daash, Member at large
Hassan Mohamed, Member at large

2023 Staff

Mitali Banerjee (PhD), Executive Director
Fatima Subiata, Project Coordinator – All Together Now
Tapagni Chakraborty, Project Coordinator - Igniting Impact
Buhlebenkosi Fiona Mpofu, Project Coordinator - Building Youth leaders together through Soccer (BYLTTS)
Amena Shehab, Project Coordinator – Telling Stories Together – Youth Lens
Dallas Gumbo, Bookkeeper

2023 Animators

Amena Shehab (Syria)
Durga Luitel (Nepal)
Nicole Nebril (Philippines)
Maude Chea (Liberia)
Mian Wang (China)
Koussigue Derping (Chad)
Tarik Dafla (Eritrea/Ethiopia)

We would also like to recognize the contributions of recent former staff:
Tania Ymbi, Community Animator Coordinator – All Together Now 2022
Shambhu Nath Chowdhury, Office Administrator, 2022

What We Do

Current Programs/Projects:

All Together Now Program
Igniting Impact
Building Youth leaders together through Soccer (BYLTTS)
Telling Stories Together – Youth Lens

Recently concluded Programs /Projects/Research:

- Colorblind Voice of Racism: Ripple Effects and Possible Solutions