Midaynta

Association of Somali Service Agencies

2003 Annual Report

Building a Better & Prosperous Community

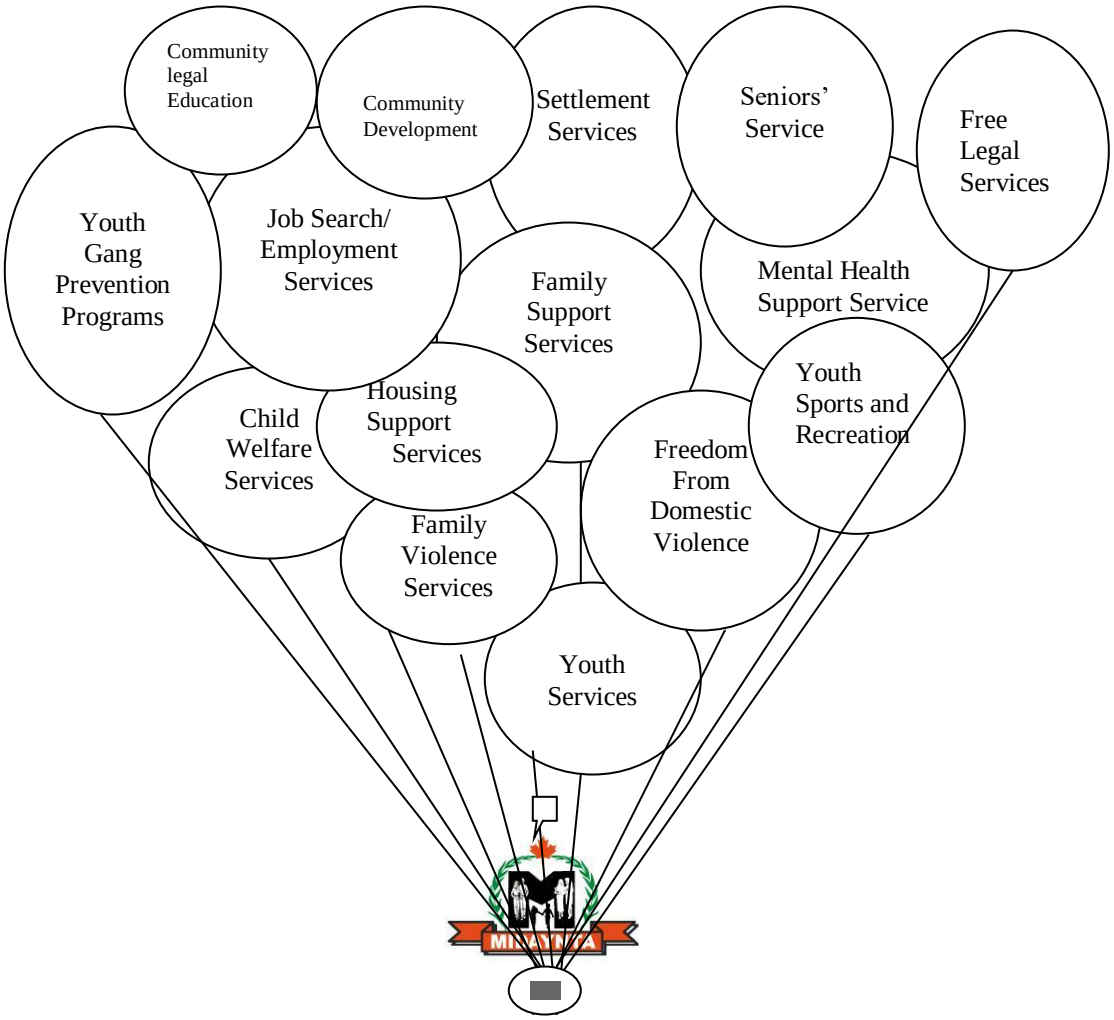
1992 Yonge Street,
Suite 203

Toronto, Ontario M4S 1Z8

Tel: (416) 544-1992

Fax (416) 440-3379

Internet: www.midaynta.com



We are celebrating TEN (10) years of successful community servic



A message from the President and the Executive Director

Ten years ago, a working group comprised of stakeholders from the Somali service agencies, official representatives from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, individuals from the legal profession and Somali community leaders convened to collectively establish a project that provides family reunification services to the refugees from Somalia. This collaborative and ground breaking project was named "Midaynta Qoyska", which when translated from the Somali language means family reunification.

In August 1995, the stakeholders decided to incorporate the project as Midaynta Association of Somali Service Agencies with the mission and mandate of improving the quality of service of the Somali Canadian community in Toronto through settlement and integration services.

The settlement and integration services provided by Midaynta continue to play a major role in the community's integrations process. However, Midaynta has expanded its services to the community considerably since its inception a decade ago. Today, our agency is managing and delivering over 16 programs and services in the areas of settlement, employment, education, homelessness, child welfare protection, youth sports and recreation, youth gang prevention, family violence prevention and counseling, mental health, isolated women support, victims services, seniors program and community development. Today, Midaynta is considered one of the largest continental African Canadian agencies in Toronto, serving the largest community from that continent of Africa. Moreover, our agency has developed its capacity to both conduct socioeconomic research studies and continues to collaborate with others in research projects.

A number of valuable services have been implemented during this fiscal year. Midaynta has initiated the development and implementation of much needed programs and services to youth, seniors and victims of woman abuse and domestic violence and their children. Our board, management and staff are looking forward to expanding and enhancing services and programs delivery to the newcomer communities in the city of Toronto.

Midaynta is not only limited to serving the Somali community, in fact, a third of our clients are from other ethnic groups. This is complimented by the multicultural and multilingual abilities and language skills of our staff and management. Consequently, services of Midaynta are delivered in several languages including Somali, English, Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, Pushti, Swahili, Romanian, and Italian. We have also established a strong and successful network of partnerships with both other ethno-cultural and mainstream agencies which contribute to our capacity to deliver some services.

Continual engagement, positive comments and tokens of appreciation to management and staff from the Somali community and other clients are very encouraging and enlightening. All stakeholders, particularly Somali families and our funders are complementing our staff for a job well done. We certainly value these motivating gestures and will continue to enhance our services to the community regardless of the challenges of limited funding resources. We are grateful for support of our Funders, Board of Directors, management, staff and volunteers for their dedication and effort to making a difference in the lives of the communities we serve.

Kinsi Ismail
President

Ibrahim Absiye
Executive Director

Who we are:

- Midaynta Association of Somali Service Agencies is a coalition of 15 member agencies and 7 associate members, which individually and collectively serve the individuals and families of newcomer communities in Toronto;
- We are the largest continental African immigrant-serving agency in the City of Toronto;
- We believe in working in partnership and collaboratively with other service providers to make a difference in developing our community and the society;
- We provide free and friendly settlement services and continue to advocate for a largely underserved and marginalized communities in the City;
- We believe and value equality and quality of community social services in building a better and prosperous society;
- We are accessible, equitable and accountable;
- We serve clients regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age and belief.

Programs & Services – 2002/2003 Highlights

Midaynta management, staff and volunteers are honoured and pleased to celebrate their successes and accomplishments in completing Ten (10) years of challenges, high achievements and increased levels of quality service delivery to our community. We have intensified our outreach efforts, expanded our programs and services, established new collaborations, networking and partnerships with both mainstream and ethno-cultural organizations in the city and increased our funding base substantially. Our accomplishments over the past 10 years would not have been possible without the commitment, hard work, and dedication of our staff and volunteers as well as the support, direction and good governance of the Board of Directors of Midaynta.

1. Immigrant Settlement & Adaptation Program (ISAP)

Multilingual settlement counsellors assist newly arrived refugees and immigrants in their settlement and integration. During the year, the staff has provided settlement and integrations related services to our community across the GTA. These services included but not limited to the following:

- Providing information and orientation about life in Canada including cultural norms, translations, housing, health, banking, legal rights and responsibilities, civic participation, etc. Periodically Midaynta conducts group information sessions on a variety of settlement related issues, to educate clients about changes in policies, procedures and requirements.

- Raising awareness around cultural diversity and racism.

- Assisting with various government applications.

- Offering linguistic an cultural interpretation and advocacy that facilitate access to services in the community;

- Free legal advice and document certifications;

- Free statutory declarations to establish personal identity by a licensed legal practitioners;

- Youth and senior services;

- Employment and job search sessions;

- Mental health awareness;

- Referrals to other appropriate agencies;

- Translation of personal documents, certified by a commissioner for oath;

- During the past year, settlement staff and volunteers provided services as summarized below:

  - Over ……. services were provided to …. clients
  - About ….% were immigration related services
  - The clients included …. newcomers in their first year in Canada
  - About …… were repeat clients who received expanded services.

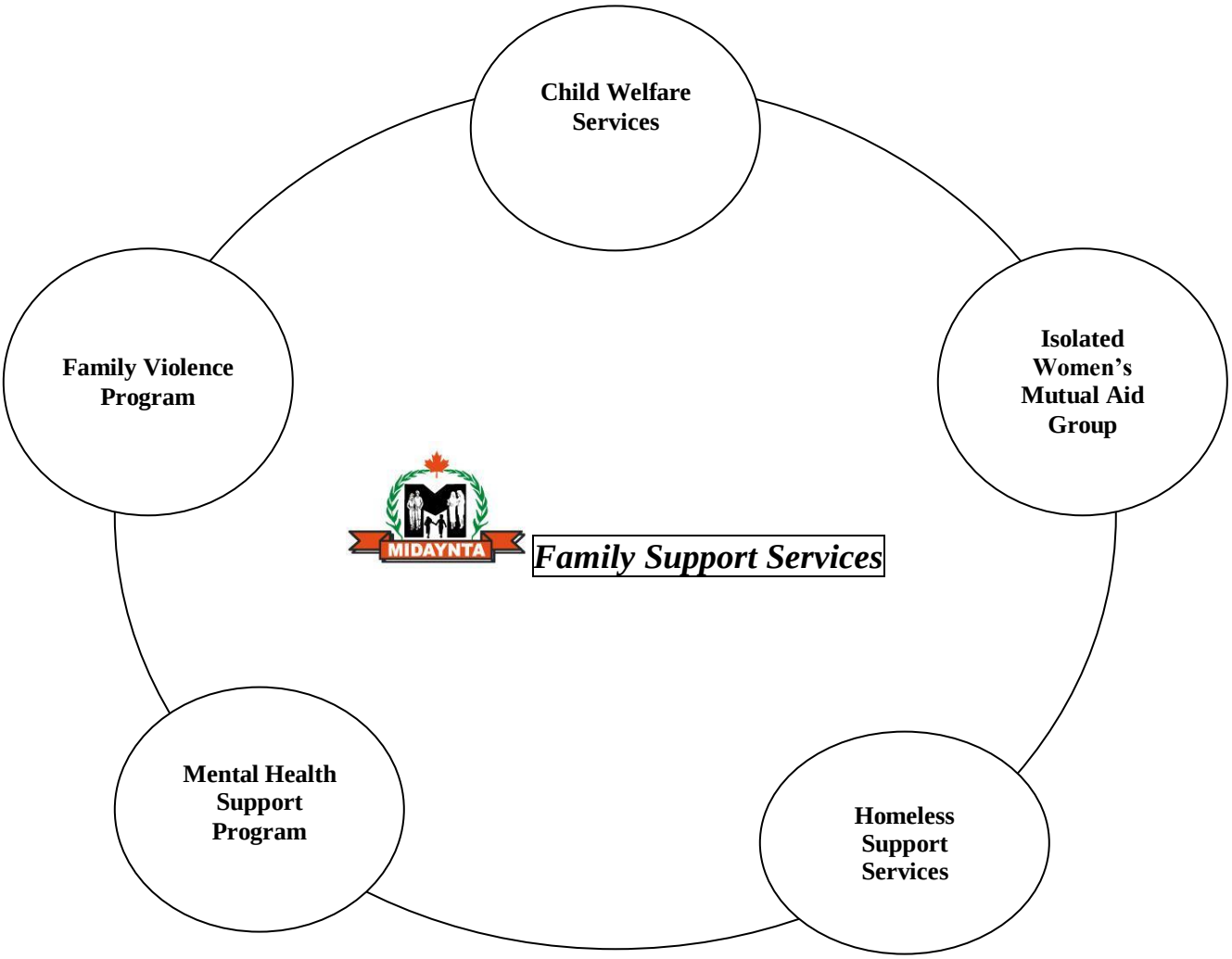
Client comment:
…. I didn't know a Somali-run community organization could help me with such efficiency, professionalism and honesty. Thank you and may Allah bless you….. I will tell every one I know about Midaynta and what you do for the community…..

We extend our thanks and appreciation to the Settlement Directorate of the CIC for their continued support to Midaynta. This support is a graphic testimony of the Department's belief in our commitment to provide professional settlement and integration services to the newcomer community.

Midaynta's deligent commitment to the provision of high quality settlement services.. has not gone unnoticed..

Citizenship and Immigration Canada Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada

Family Support Programs & Services



We are extremely grateful to our funders

TORONTO
Housing & Homeless Support
Family Violence & Prevention
Community Legal Education
Drug Abuse Prevention

Somali Women's Mutual Aid Support

THE ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION
LA FONDATION TRILLIUM DE L'ONTARIO
Somali Family Mental Health Support Program
Somali Youth Support Program

Children's Aid FOUNDATION
Bridging Child Welfare Project

2. Family Support & Crisis Intervention Program

The primary goal of this program is to promote preventive measures to combat family violence and breakdown. The program provides practical and emotional support to victims of family violence through crisis prevention and safety planning. The program serves the East African communities in Toronto who are victims of domestic violence such as wife abuse, child abuse and elder abuse. The program had the following four major parts, which has achieved substantial results during the year:

a.	Community outreach and education	570 participants
b.	Workshops (six)	208 participants
c.	Direct service	605 participants
d.	Parenting	66 participants

Participants' feedback provided encouragement and motivation for the project staff. Some of the comments from the clients included the following:

> *"... I was afraid when I got a call from Children's Aid Society but when I called Midaynta Family Support program, I was assured that I will get support. With the support and information from the program staff I was able to work on my challenges...."*

> *"... I felt good to express my feelings with people who understand..."*

3. Somali Women Mutual Aid Group

The purpose of the mutual aid group is to outreach and connect socially isolated women to each other and to services/programs their community and/or neighbourhoods. The program is a self-help group where participants learn from each other. The goal is to reduce isolation faced by Somali women and increase peer support and access to community information and resources. The services include family conflict resolution, cultural counselling, support for new mothers, parenting and support for women in crisis.

4. Bridging Child Welfare

The goal of the program is to raise the awareness of the Somali community about child welfare legislation in Canada and to educate the staff of the Children's Aid Society of Toronto about the culture of the Somali community in the context of child welfare. The program also provides education to the community to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Bridging Child Welfare project is a joint partnership with Somaliland Women's Organization, Somali Immigrant Aid Organization and the Children's Aid Society of Toronto as the Trustee. Although the program ended on June 30, yet Midaynta continues

to provide this service to the community along with members of some of the partner agencies.

5. Family Mental Health Support

A sound mental health condition has huge benefits in every aspect of a person's life. In view of the importance of this service, Midaynta, in partnership with Somaliland Canadian Society and Family Outreach and Response Program (FOR), provides culturally sensitive services to the Somali families with mentally ill members.

The goal of the Somali Family Mental Health Support program is to increase awareness in the Somali community about mental health issues and to increase the community's access to mainstream mental health services. The program also increases Somali family's capacity to understand and cope with mentally ill family members. The services of this project include, but not limited to:

- increase awareness of the prevalence of mental health problems among members of the Somali community in Toronto with focus on depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, posttraumatic stress disorders and suicidal symptoms.
- provide information and referral to the appropriate services in the city;
- advocate for families in a variety of issues such as welfare, housing, employment, education and legal services.
- Empower the Somali community to deal with mental health issues.

6. Housing and Homeless Prevention

Support services under this program include housing help and eviction prevention. The program provides culturally sensitive assistance to prevent homelessness in the Somali community. Services also include assistance to find and maintain affordable housing, information, referral, eviction prevention, housing stablization, counselling, mentoring programs and peer support initiatives. The following table summarizes some of the activities of the housing services provided during the year.

Category	Housed	Prevented Eviction	Stablized	Referred to Transfer
Singles	16	28	44	30
2 Parent families	2	2	2	16
Lone Parent families	22	3	45	87

7. Job Search & Employment Services

In partnership with Culturelink, Midaynta has successfully delivered Job Search and Employment workshops for the job-ready newcomers. Together we conducted over……during the year. This program has exceeded target expectations and outcomes in all of its component measurements.

Midaynta Job Search & Employment program provides employment assessment, referral, pre-employment training, employability skill enhancement, resume writing and appropriate job search sessions for unemployed/underemployed newcomers with limited English language skills, lack of Canadian experience, discrimination in the workplace, lack of knowledge about the Canadian work culture and labour market information.

Clients of the Job Search and Employment Services unit have access to our computer lab which provides free usage of computers with high speed internet access for job search and resume development.

8. Problem Gambling Project

Midaynta has been invited to conduct a comprehensive research project on Gambling and Problem Gambling within the Toronto Somali community. This study was completed in February 2003 and its findings will be released in the near future. Based on these findings, we are currently working on phase II of the project – Action Plan which will articulate specific intervention, preventive and educational programs for problem gamblers in the community.

Furthermore, Midaynta is working with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in order to outreach and provide limited clinical counselling to problem gamblers as a pilot project to be completed in March 2004.

9. Somali Youth Coalition

Our youth support services have increased dramatically during this year. Midaynta in partnership with the Children's Aid Society of Toronto and Somali Youth Association of Toronto (SOYAT), under the umbrella of the Somali Youth Coalition, have started providing services under two different programs: Gang Prevention program and the Youth Support Services project.

The Gang Prevention project targets the youth in the Rexdale area and aims at working with the Somali community, Somali parents and Canadian systems such as Education, parks & Recreation, Child Welfare, Criminal Justice, providing educational and preventive services to the Somali youth and their parents in that neighbourhood.

The Somali Youth Support program, on the other hand, works with the Somali community as well as mainstream institutions to reduce the risk factors causing number of Somali youth to drop out of school, join gangs and get into trouble with the law. It is the goal of the project to adopt an early prevention approach by promoting staying in school, getting involved in community recreation and sporting events and developing youth leaders who can act as role models for other Somali youth.

10. Seniors' Services

Midaynta joined the Breaking Down the Barriers to Seniors Services project for seniors under the Mullti Agency Partnership Project (MAPP) with the lead of the St. Clair West Seniors. This service is run at Weston and Lawrence area and has become quite popular among the Somali senior population. Its services include seniors' recreational and educational programs, congregate dining, various health-related services, meals on wheels, transportation and escort, home help/homemaking, respite care, adult day programs and seniors' case management (information and referral, crisis intervention and assistance).

11. Free Legal Service

One of the most important services to the community during the year was the provision of free legal services. Legal Aid Ontario has generously assigned a lawyer to Midaynta in order to help the community in resolving some of their legal concerns. A lawyer is always available to prepare statutory declarations and to offer advice on other legal topics such as small court cases, schools, employment, housing, domestic violence, immigration, etc. An average of 64 clients per month are served.

12. Community Legal Education – Civic Participation

With an increasing number of the community becoming Canadian citizens, and with year being an election year for all levels of governments, we have mobilized the community with the objective of full civic engagement and participation of the political system. We started with voter education based on the issues that affect the community and the population in the City such as poverty, housing, education, health care, immigration, youth and seniors services, etc.

13. Community/Agency Capacity Building

It has been our mission that we improve the quality of life of the newcomer families and individuals through the provision of settlement services. After a decade of service to the community, Midaynta decided to revisit its mission and mandate.

Therefore, in May and June 2003, Midaynta Board of Directors, with the support of the staff, agreed to make the organization more effective through a blend of sound management, strong governance, and a persistent rededication to achieving results. A plan is underway to enhance the community capacity and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency.

Board of Directors

Executive Committee:

1	Kinsi Ismail	-	President
2	Mohamed Bood	-	V. President
3	Elmi Ibrahim	-	Treasurer
4	Mohamed Ali	-	Secretary

Members:

5	Hassan Farah	-	Member
6	Osman Ali	-	Member
7	Mahad Yusuf	-	Member
8	Abdulkadir Abow	-	Member
9	Rashid Osman	-	Member
10	Abukar Haji	-	Member
11	Ahmed Farah	-	Member
12	Hareda Mohamud	-	Member
13	Abdirahman Abdulle	-	Member
14	Bashi Hosh	-	Member
15	Halima Saad	-	Member

Management:

1. Ibrahim Absiye	-	Executive Director
2. Mohamed Tabit	-	Program Manager
3. Mohamed Ismail	-	Accountant

Staff:

4. Said Ahmed	-	Settlement Counsellor
5. Abdulkadir Ali	-	Settlement Counsellor
6. Ubah Nur	-	Settlement Counsellor
7. Camille Lee	-	Advice Lawyer (Legal Aid Ontario)
8. Lul Siad	-	In-Take Worker
9. Faisal Hassan	-	Housing Support Counsellor
10 Amina Warfa	-	Family Support Counsellor
11 Shakira Quraishi	-	JSW/Employment Counsellor
12 Maryan Dalal	-	Mental Health Support Counsellor
13 Abdullahi Elmi	-	Mental Health Support Counsellor
14. Idris Madar	-	Child Welfare/Seniors Support
15 Ali-Bahsi Farah	-	Youth Support Worker
16 Amina Yasin-Omar	-	Youth Support Worker

Volunteers:

Volunteers continue to be vital to the work of Midaynta. During the year, over 50 volunteers donated their skills, time and talent to the programs of Midaynta. In return, Midaynta remains committed to providing opportunities for the volunteers in gaining new skills as well as Canadian experience.

Without the participation and dedication of our volunteers, it would be impossible to deliver and accomplish high quality services to the community. There are always ways to help and we are thankful for those who came forward and made a difference.

Summary of the Finances

REVENUE		2003	2002
Federal:	Citizenship and Immigration Canada	$ 279,372	269,265
	COSTI/OCASI/Culturelink (JSW)	9,045	9,188
Provincial:	Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre/COSTI	-	50,000
Municipality:	City of Toronto	209,290	105,543
Foundations:	Children's Aid Foundation	23,300	13,500
	United Way of Greater Toronto	12,450	12,450
	Ontario Trillium Foundation	103,406	1,694
Other:	COSTI – Family Violence Prevention	-	2,400
	General Revenue/Fundraising	47,750	42,478
	Total Revenue	**$ 684,613**	**506,518**
	Total Expenses	**$ 555,983**	**469,358**
	Excess of Revenue over Expenses	**$ 128,630**	**37,161**



Happy 10th Anniversary