



A TALE OF TWO COMMUNITIES IN HAMILTON: A MODEL OF CHANGE

THE SOMALI MIDGAN AND ROMA MINORITY
FROM HUNGARY AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

HAMILTON URBAN CORE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

2008

Prepared by: Nadine P. Miles

Table of Contents

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	2
<i>HAMILTON</i>	3
<i>BACKGROUND</i>	4
<i>ROMA MINORITY FROM HUNGARY AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC</i>	6
TODAY	7
<i>THE SOMALI MIDGAN COMMUNITY</i>	8
TODAY	11
<i>THE MODEL OF CHANGE</i>	12
<i>BUILDING CAPACITY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE MODEL (BCSC)</i>	14
<i>THE SOMALI MIDGAN INITIATIVE IN ACTION</i>	15
<i>THE ROMA MINORITY FROM HUNGARY AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC INITIATIVES IN ACTION</i>	17
<i>THE INITIATIVES IN ACTION</i>	19
THE COMMUNITIES TOGETHER 2005 – 2008	19
SHARED SUCCESS.....	20
<i>BUILDING ON COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AND ASSETS</i>	21



HAMILTON URBAN CORE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE
Community Health – It's a Partnership

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Introduction

Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre is a non-profit, community-based agency providing primary health care services and health promotion programs to people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless, immigrants and refugees, people living with mental illness, individuals and families with low/no income, isolated seniors and street involved youth.

Many new communities have chosen Hamilton Urban Core as a result of the Centre's approach and commitment to reducing the systemic barriers in accessing the basic services to maintain quality health. They have also view Hamilton Urban Core as their main resource for settling in the community. Newcomers report feeling safe because they receive services that are culturally sensitive, language appropriate and services delivered from providers who have an understanding of where people are located socially, economically, politically and culturally.

In addition to primary health care and health promotion, one of the main pillars of the community health centre model is community development and community capacity building. It is with this approach that Hamilton Urban Core has been delivering services to populations that are among the most marginalized in the community for more than 10 years.

Hamilton

The City of Hamilton, like many other cities in Canada is struggling with increase social challenges, people living in poverty, rising levels of unemployment, an increase to homelessness and under housed people, growing numbers of people facing barriers to healthcare due to race, gender, age, language, culture, ability reasons, mental health issues, and many other socio economic reasons.

These struggles are often intensified for communities because of continuous cuts to health and social services. Many of the services and agencies that have historically provided some support for people in these areas have seen either cuts to funding or have reached the point that they have had to close their doors forever. Thus there is a large gap between the services needed for this community and the services actually available. This gap becomes even more expansive when there are multiple barriers as many newcomers to Canada often face. Obtaining services to maintain the basic necessities of life and well being seems insurmountable to most individuals and families. Social isolation, low income, poverty, discrimination, homelessness, being under housed, untreated mental health issues and lack of access, are the well known determinants of health.

When social assistance rates were cut by 21.6% in 1995, Hamilton like many other regions within the Province found that people were forced to choose between feeding themselves and their families and paying the rent. Add to this the many funding cuts to nonprofit housing and mental health services, the increase of the availability of crack cocaine, crystal methamphetamines and the increased abuse of prescription medication; the result is not just the individual who struggles to live in poverty but a community in despair.

New immigrants to Hamilton find the struggle even more difficult. According to the 2006 Census from Statistics Canada, Hamilton has the third highest proportion of foreign born in the country, 24.4% after Toronto and Vancouver. They often come to Canada from war torn countries or situations of persecution in hopes of establishing a better life, only to find that the opportunities are very limited or non existent.

In 2005 Hamilton Urban Core decided to focus on the two prominent newcomer groups: the Roma Minority from Hungary and The Czech Republic and the Somali Midgan communities. Both communities identified Hamilton Urban Core as their main source of support. Given the lack of funding and supports Hamilton Urban Core decided to further enhance the relationship and develop partnerships with the Roma and Somali communities to help build their capacity and ease their settlement in Hamilton.

With funding from the Hamilton Community Foundation’s “Tackling Poverty Together – Community Fund” the Roma Minority from Hungary and the Czech Republic and Somali Midgan Community Initiatives were born. This report will talk about these initiatives and explain the Community Development approach used to help build community capacity. The report will also look at the “Model of Change” process used, as well as each community’s accomplishments and successes and finally their goals for the future.

“We were born to unite with our fellow men, and to join in community with the human race” - [Cicero](#)

Background

Many new Canadians are choosing Hamilton as their place of residence; amongst them are the Hungarian and Czech Roma and Somali Midgan communities who have come to identify Hamilton as their home. In working with new communities it is important that the approaches used are sensitive to the experiences and realities of the individuals and the groups as a whole. This includes acknowledging that race, culture, gender, language, class, socio-economic status, nationality and religion are important factors related to or which impact upon the organizing and mobilizing of communities. Marginalized or vulnerable populations also face systemic barriers and structures. True community development recognizes that each group or community has specific and often unique needs and may move forward in very different ways. Their activity is usually categorized negatively as being “different” from rather than specific to.

In the initiative with the Somali Midgan and Hungarian and Czech Roma communities it was important that adequate time and attention be given to facilitating community development and capacity building. This meant identifying community needs at a pace that was appropriate for each group. For this reason Hamilton Urban Core chose to use an asset-based community development approach. This approach focuses on the assets, values, skills, experiences and talents of the community as well as identifying the assets within the environment. Asset-based community development assumes that all individuals and groups have strengths and talents and it is intended to build on those strengths. Asset-based community development reports four phases of movement from the initiative design through to community sustainability. Blocks of engagement are used throughout the process such as outreach, infrastructure development, relationship building, community development, advocacy and evaluation.

With the funding received from the Hamilton Community Foundation the Community Outreach Coordinators who were hired from the respective communities, assisted and encouraged the development of a more formalized organizing structure. This enabled the communities to engage in this initiative and to become further established. The community building work took place on individual, group and community levels. On an individual level the Community Outreach Coordinators would empower community members through counseling, guidance and advocacy to facilitate access to education, employment, social and other support services. The tools and information were then shared with the larger community through groups, special events and information sessions.

The Coordinators assumed a leadership role in working with each community, and with the development of the initiative community leaders emerged within the groups who engaged in the work with the Coordinators. At the end of the initiative it was hoped that both communities would be much more self reliant and self governing. This multi-dimensional approach characterized this initiative and allowed for addressing many of the unique issues that each of the communities face. The Coordinators focused on five areas of community building as follows:

1. **Health Promotion and Education:** In this area the initiative focused on addressing community identified issues. This was an important step in helping people access the knowledge, information and services needed to improve their overall well being. Examples of some of the self identified issues included: understanding mental health and wellness, learning about diabetes and its affect, addressing social and cultural isolation, encouraging positive self esteem and self image, maintaining good health status, and facilitating drug awareness. Services were delivered through a combination of information sessions and integrated workshops organized by the Coordinators and co-facilitated by appropriate professionals.
2. **Advocacy and Information:** Information sessions and workshops on the topics such as Landlord and Tenants Rights and responsibilities, the impact of racism and discrimination and internalized racism, Community Development - What does it mean? How to mobilize your community, understanding Ontario Works and ODSP, looking for safe housing, Human Rights education, advocating for the community, problem solving immigration and settlement issues. The formats for the sessions were developed in cooperation with community members to ensure language and cultural sensitivity and appropriateness. Community agencies were engaged to provide information as appropriate.
3. **Cultural Interpretation and Translation:** Cultural interpretation and translation were essential components of the initiative in order to effectively connect community members with the services and information they needed. Including these services facilitated access to the essential services and health promotion and advocacy and ensured that the rights of the community and its members were not violated. It also provided the cultural context that enabled the initiative to move forward with the confidence of those involved.
4. **Community Outreach:** The outreach component consisted of a variety of activities designed to reach each community. Activities included individual and community meetings to create a platform for dialogue and ongoing discussion, special events and community specific celebrations.
5. **Economic Development:** This introductory component focused on activities designed to address issues of money management, accessing income, and skill development. Activities included establishing skills building sessions. Partnerships with educational and trade institutions, such as the Threshold School of Building, facilitated the process of the integration to Canadian job market in one

area. A general orientation to Canadian labour market and job searching skills was also introduced along with presentations from OW and ODSP focused on available employment related supports. The initiative strengthened the partnership with Frontier College by developing language related activities focused on adults.

Roma Minority from Hungary and the Czech Republic

In 1997 approximately 1,500 Roma Minority Refugees fled to Canada and were settled in Hamilton. They were escaping the persecution they faced in the Czech Republic. In 1998 this community approached Hamilton Urban Core for help as they were facing many barriers to accessing health and settling here in Hamilton. In the year 2000 approximately 5,000 more Roma Minority came to Hamilton from Hungary. Through word of mouth and community outreach methods initiated by Hamilton Urban Core they too came to the Centre for their primary health care needs, as well as advocacy and support.

To many in the Roma community this was not the “Promised Land” they had expected. They faced discrimination and were often chastised as they were back home, and reported a feeling of not being wanted anywhere. The Coordinator and Hamilton Urban Core responded by providing important services and supports to help community members in feeling connected to the city and a part of the larger community. Some of the services included primary health care services, advocacy, health promotion and education, counseling and more.

Issues identified and the actions taken under the initiative for the Roma community:

1. Communication and misinformation were significant barriers in this community. In the Roma Minority Community Initiative we hosted discussions on the need for better communication and trust within the community in order to move forward and effect true community development.
2. The Roma minorities faced discrimination from landlords who appeared to believe that they could overcharge for rent and falsely evict individuals and families. This was a situation experienced repeatedly throughout the community negatively impacting on everyone. In an effort to address this critical area Hamilton Urban Core advocated with Public Health and the Building Inspection Department of the City to ensure safe and suitable accommodations.
3. Securing employment was an important area for many within the Roma community and they met with challenges frequently. Realizing that the community was facing many barriers to employment Hamilton Urban Core held information sessions on foreign trained professional licensing and education and job search in Canada to first facilitate access to needed information and to secondly facilitate access to employment opportunities.
4. Feelings of depression and social isolation were identified frequently by community members. In many cases people were not able to put into words their feelings of disappointment, sadness or isolation. It became apparent that depression was a significant determinant of health in this community and most notably affected females at a greater rate. As a first step information sessions were provided about managing depression and as a result this community decided to come to Family Saturdays to get together and talk as one way of self-managing.

5. The Roma community met with a number of challenges involving various degrees of their rights being violated. Lacking the information and knowledge of resources and process provided a further hindrance to this community. Legal information sessions were organized around the immigration process, parenting in Canada, the landlord and Tenant Act and rights and responsibilities, and deportation and the Refugee process in Canada.
6. The women of the community identified that there were no language or culturally appropriate employment programs to assist them in finding employment. Many of the women did not have work experience or a work history that would be considered relevant in their new setting. In addition they did not know how to prepare a resume or what was the purpose of a resume. The Coordinator invited several employment agencies and continuing education institutes over a period of time to meet with the women and assist them in gaining the knowledge they needed to begin the process of looking for work. Many of the women involved in the initiative were able to find some form of full or part-time employment.

***“We don't accomplish anything in this world alone ...
and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the
weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something. “***
-- Sandra Day O'Connor

Today

It is anticipated that there will be even more arrivals now the many of the Eastern European countries are a part of the Schengen Agreement which has lifted many of the visa requirements for Schengen countries' citizens. The term Schengen Agreement is used for two agreements concluded between European states in 1985 and 1990 which deal with the abolition of systematic border controls between the participating countries. (Wikipedia) This means that many of the Schengen countries residents can access other Schengen countries and Canada. Although for many Roma Minority people who have been denied citizenship in their own countries this may in fact make travelling for them even more difficult. Opportunities to flee the persecution and social exclusion in Europe are very limited. Those few who find a way to leave escape to countries such as Canada and Australia, as many of the Western European countries including France, United Kingdom have made it clear that they do not want Roma refugees.

So far this year over 140 families have arrived in Hamilton from the Czech Republic and Hungary. There are approximately 1,783 Roma Minority from both countries in Hamilton.

The Roma are by many measures the most despised and discriminated ethnic minority in Europe. After the fall of communism in 1989 the persecution of Roma communities had intensified. Many governments have made proposals and public statements with reference to expelling Roma people from their countries with popular support.

The Roma are often treated as little more than second class citizens and are not offered the same protections as other citizens. Roma communities in Europe face ongoing forced evictions from their

homes, expulsions from villages and towns, physical assault and murder by skinheads, policemen and neighbours, and exclusion from public places. Roma women face forced sterilization in hospitals and or are refused medical care completely while Roma children are routinely taken away from their families and placed in institutions for mentally challenged without merit or evidence. In their daily lives they walk amongst their non-Roma counterparts, as if they do not exist. It is not uncommon to see mothers with their naked children begging for food in city centres such as Prague and Budapest while people passing by either ignore them or yell insults at them or even worse, assault them physically. The racial abuse and hatred of Roma peoples is so bad that the European Union recently adopted an initiative in attempts to have Roma communities recognized throughout Europe. This initiative is called “Decade of Roma Inclusion”.

Most Roma in Europe are poor. Poverty in Roma communities is pandemic and their life expectancy is up to a third lower than their non-Roma counterparts. Roma communities in Europe face barriers to the basic necessities of life and are often refused medical care, housing, employment and the basic things entitled to them as citizens.

In Hamilton, this community continues to struggle and unfortunately have been forgotten by many services and agencies, as there are new and emerging community issues.

“IN EVERY COMMUNITY THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE. IN EVERY NATION, THERE ARE WOUNDS TO HEAL. IN EVERY HEART THERE IS THE POWER TO DO IT.” -- MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

The Somali Midgan Community

On November 4, 2003 the first group of Midgan Somali “government-sponsored” refugees arrived in Canada. This was the first group to arrive from the refugee camp in Daadab Kenya. As of December 2004 there were approximately 500 Midgan Somali refugees in Hamilton. In June 2004 this minority community approached Hamilton Urban Core and asked for help. Their settlement to the community had been meeting great obstacles. They needed assistance with access to health services and supports, information, social acculturation and knowledge of systems, advocacy and counseling. Hamilton Urban Core responded immediately providing health promotion education, primary health care services, advocacy, counseling, cultural interpretation and translation and addressing urgent issues.

The Midgan Somali was deemed vulnerable or “at risk” by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) because they had been experiencing persecution in the refugee camp for many years due to their caste status. The camp in Daadab was also being closed and so the inhabitants would be forced to relocate once again. The government’s plan was to resettle individuals and families together either in Hamilton, Winnipeg or in Edmonton so that they maintained their ties with friends and family members. The CIC thought that keeping people in the communities that they had developed in the camps would provide them with the stability needed to better integrate into their new communities here in Canada.

The situation in Somalia is still dire. There is no official government, president or prime minister. There is very little governance or safety. The societal structure in Somali is based on clans and caste. All Somalis depend on their clans for economic, physical and social support. The people who assert the power in the land are usually majority clan members. Unfortunately the Midgan clan suffers the most from this instability because they are considered one of the lowest clans on the power scale. In fact in the refugee camps, Somalis from small or outcaste clans such as the Midgans are harassed, beaten, and raped.

Professor Asha A. Samad explains the caste system very well in her statement to the Committee to Eliminate Racial Discrimination:

¹“Caste stratification is a daily component of Somali Society. In the smallest nomad village, in towns, in cities, in refugee camps, as well as in the overseas Somali communities, these stratifications are alive well. “

Genealogical lines of descents are taught to children from an early age. The family clan history is told and retold throughout life, including its relations with other clans. Traditionally caste was directly related to occupation, residence, political and civilian opportunities, and status throughout life. This stratification is less important when the nation-state and its institutions function well, and much more important when it is weak, collapsing or non-existent, as in the past few decades. However, caste is important to most Somalis even in communities abroad.

To be a Midgan, or an outcaste person, in Somali society is to suffer life-long indignities, to be deemed impure, unlucky, sinful, polluting, and thus meriting the disdain, avoidance, and abuse of others. Even small children shout insults at both child and adult Midgans. Many Midgans have been denied food, medical treatment, and protection just because of their outcaste status by many other Somalis.

Midgans have been beaten brutally, wounded, raped, kidnapped, and forced into slave and unpaid labour just because of their outcaste status. They have no weapons, allies or lands that they control and can escape to. Most Midgan are attached to “noble” dominant clans as their clients, serf, or reprisals from those “noble” clans dominating them.”

Being marginalized and discriminated against and lives both threatened and uprooted in their home country of Somalia, the Somali Midgan community was greatly disappointed when they faced similar discrimination, oppression and barriers to accessing essential services after they arrived in Hamilton. Hamilton Urban Core took a leadership role and jointly with the community conducted a number of focus groups and needs identification sessions. Following are the needs that were identified by the members of Somali community in Hamilton:

Somali Midgan Community

¹ Statement to The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, August 2002. – A Brief Review of Somali Outcaste groups. Summary of research by Professor Asha A. Samad, City University of New York and Executive Director, SAFRAD – Somali Association

1. The Somali youth raised the issue of lack of skills to effectively participate in the Canadian labour market. Hamilton Urban Core connected some of the youth with Threshold School of Building.

The first group of Somali youth graduated on April 1, 2005 and all with an A+ average. The Coordinators continued to build cooperation with a number of educational and trade institutions to facilitate newcomers' access to Canadian job market.

2. Several parents in the community reported that their children were having difficulty in school, especially with their homework. Given the language barrier and learning gap, parents were not able to assist their children with their homework. Hamilton Urban Core responded by providing a homework club. This was provided in conjunction with volunteers from McMaster University and older youth from the Somali Midgan community.

As a result of this program the children's English reading and writing skills greatly improved. Further exploration is taking place in regards to developing other related activities.

3. Parents with children attending Sir John A. MacDonald School raised concerns about their studies and the re-occurring conflicts between some of the Somali children and other children. Hamilton Urban Core facilitated several meetings with the school administration to address the parent's concerns. As a result a committee of parents, school administration and Hamilton Urban Core was formed. This committee worked together to see how best the school could serve the Somali Community, which accounted for the largest immigrant population in that school
4. Many families and individuals were facing problems with the housing and landlords. Some of the issues the community faced ranged from illegal evictions, to illegal entry to apartments to attempts to overcharge tenants. Hamilton Urban Core worked cooperatively with local Community Legal Clinics and organized and facilitated information sessions to address this issue on a broader scale. In almost all cases the legal clinics also provided direct support and problem solving to the individuals and the problems were, to a large extent, amicably resolved.

At the same time, community members who were most victimized were connected with both community legal clinics and legal aid. As a direct outcome of this action, several evictions were revoked, landlords reprimanded and the number of incidents related to the landlords declined greatly.

5. Families raised some concern around lack of physical activity for their children in their homes and neighborhoods. A community committee was formed to approach the City of Hamilton's Culture and Recreation department. As a result community members from the Somali Midgan community were directly involved and participated in the development of recreational strategy for the city of Hamilton.

ALSO BELIEVE THAT IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE TO CHANGE ALONE. WE NEED TO JOIN WITH OTHERS WHO WILL PUSH US IN OUR THINKING AND CHALLENGE US TO DO THINGS WE DIDN'T BELIEVE OURSELVES CAPABLE OF.

-- FRANCES MOORE LAPPE

Today

Today the number of community members in the Somali Midgan community is approximately 150, although there are new families arriving monthly. The lower numbers can be attributed to the lack of job opportunities in Hamilton, which caused a mass migration of many of the skilled, literate, young and healthy community members. The majority of the community members who left Hamilton were young men. They left in hope of being able to secure employment in a more job friendly environment so that they could provide financial support to their family members in Hamilton as well as to the family members who were left behind in the refugee camp in Kenya. Added to their challenge is the requirement to repay the federal government for the costs of the flight to Canada for the entire family. Without adequate income the combination of challenges and responsibilities became almost unbearable for families with five or more children.

Statistically youth, immigrants, visible minority workers and women are more likely to have part-time minimum wage jobs. Hamilton's unemployment rate in 2004 was 6.3% compared to the provincial rate of 6.1%. This mass exodus left many of the community's women without support, relegating many of the women and their children a live of poverty. Even when employed working women in Hamilton earn 62 cents for every dollar men make and the six out of ten Hamiltonians reporting "no income" are women making the need for effective interventions even more important for the Midgan Somali women.

More than half of the women among recent immigrant groups are living in poverty in Hamilton. Women in Hamilton have a poverty rate of 22% compared with men's rate of 18%. Visible minority women have a poverty rate of 36%. Women are particularly impacted because the employment opportunities usually require a certain education level and the ability to speak English and professional work experience things that many immigrant women already face barriers to accessing in their home countries.

The Model of Change

The Somali Midgan and Roma Communities were not the first large group of newcomers to come to Hamilton Urban Core for assistance. Providing services to new and marginalized populations is the nature of the work of most community health centres – it is, in fact, inherent in the community health centre model. The Centre had been using an informal model of change for its development work with communities for a long time and wanted to formalize the process by choosing “the Building Capacity for Social Change Model (BCSC)” for this initiative. This decision was based research of a number of different approaches used in variety of projects in countries that addressed similar issues for the same communities. Hamilton Urban Core also conducted focus group discussions to engage community members and used the results, outcomes and suggestions from these discussions to select the most appropriate approach. The decision also considered some of the initial work that had already been achieved. The Community Coordinators took leadership in compiling earlier achievements and initiated the steps in the planning stages.

The Community Coordinators used the outcomes of the focus groups as well as client satisfaction surveys to work with the community to further develop and implement community specific programs and activities. This ensured that they addressed issues that were not only current but also of importance to the communities.

Within the first two years of using this model the following outcomes were realized in each community:

- An increase in the number of people with access to health care, resources and information and therefore were able to realize and improved quality of life
- An increased level of knowledge about resources available in the community and how to access them
- Improved access to programs, activities and services offered by Hamilton Urban Core designed to address the social and economic determinants of health
- Networking and collaboration with community agencies and service providers to increase access to income, health services and social supports for those who were new immigrants or refugees and at risk of being homeless
- A reduction in the number of individual community members relying on social assistance and a corresponding increase in individuals who were able to secure some form of employment
- The number of community members being called to the Housing Tribunal as a result of a breakdown in the landlord – tenant relationship was been reduced.
- Increased knowledge of and access to potential funding sources for community generated initiatives, (such as operating a community garden), the legal system and local resources or supports including the Essence Banquet hall, who provided meeting space on a gratuitous basis.
- Further established and stabilized the community in general and developed and implemented a self governing structure.

The outcomes of these initiatives were measured by collecting the information from both the communities’ and service providers’ perspective. The evaluations tools used included quantitative information such as service use (i.e. number of people participating), client satisfaction surveys, informal

discussion and client comments or feedback, attendance records and registration information, provider observation, comments and input from referral sources. Community members were continually informed of the outcomes of the evaluations through word of mouth, community meetings and reports by the Coordinators.

Building Capacity for Social Change Model (BCSC)

There are five phases of change and five building blocks for moving towards social change and community development identified in the building capacity for social change model. It is important to understand that each community will move through these phases at different stages and perhaps at a different pace throughout the development process. Any movement or progress is based on the location of the community and the range and degree of challenges and barriers they experience in society. Below is a generic template of the model.

	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
Community Building Areas	Designing the Project	Community Planning	Community Establishment	Community Sustainability
Community Development	Review of previous current planning projects. Development of culturally-based community planning processes	Community Specific visioning/goal setting. Program Development, Resource Planning	Physical, economic and social development. Service delivery systems/networks. HCF Funding partnerships. Program/Project monitoring/review.	Leadership transition / renewal. Institutional sustainability: organizations, collaborations and service delivery agreements. Institutional development: community controlled media, communication networks research/evaluation
Organizing and Advocacy of Institutional Change	Review of community history including struggles/victories Identification of existing advocacy organizations/campaigns	Issue and strategy identification. Review/assessment of organizational/neighborhood initiatives and projects	Defining policy agenda. Policy/advocacy campaigns. Regional linkages	Community-led outreach to target groups based on community goals and needs
Community Research and Evaluation	Compilation of information on community history, demography, leadership groups, networks, planning projects, capacity building programs	Community story telling. Environmental scan Community mapping	Assessment of program/project outcomes. Identification of best practices. Comparative community analysis	Community organized evaluations processes

The Somali Midgan Initiative in Action

It was important during the initial phase of the initiative for the Community Outreach Coordinators to gather current information about the experiences of the community and to hear their stories. The Coordinator for the Somali Midgan Initiative provided services and information based on the needs identified by the community. The following chart illustrates the initiative in action and gives a snapshot of some of the programs and services provided to, for and by the community.

Community Building Areas	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Designing the Project	Community Planning	Community Establishment	Community Sustainability
Community Development	<p>Community focus groups</p> <p>Community and Hamilton Urban Core meetings</p>	<p>Meetings, workshops and information sessions directed at building capacity in the community:</p> <p>Recreational resources strategy meeting</p> <p>Understanding parenting in Canada and further developing parenting skills for the Canadian context</p> <p>How to access higher education</p> <p>Diabetes awareness program for Somali women</p> <p>Alzheimer's education</p> <p>ESL Classes</p>	<p>Activities targeted at helping supporting community members in making Hamilton their home:</p> <p>ABC's of the School System - understanding the school system and how to engage with teachers and administrators</p> <p>Back to School Camp for children</p> <p>New Canadians meet Canadian Law</p> <p>ESL Classes designed to meet the language and literacy needs of the community</p>	
Organizing and Advocacy of Institutional	Community focus groups	Meetings, workshops and information sessions directed at	Organizing activities to advocate for	

Change	Community and Hamilton Urban Core meetings	<p>building capacity in the community:</p> <p>Examining community history</p> <p>Inventory of programs available to the community and existing barriers to access</p> <p>Identifying health promotion needs</p>	<p>change:</p> <p>Meeting with Hamilton Culture and Recreation Department for children’s recreational programming</p> <p>Networking with the Sudanese community and other communities in Hamilton</p> <p>Access to Day Care Subsidies</p>	
Community Research and Evaluation	<p>Community Feedback</p> <p>Community and Hamilton Urban Core develop benchmarks for the initiative</p>	Developing appropriate evaluative tools and mechanisms	Participant evaluations	

The Roma Minority from Hungary and The Czech Republic Initiatives in Action

It was important during the initial phase of the initiative for the Community Outreach Coordinators to gather current information about the experiences of the community and hear their stories. As such, the Coordinator for the Roma Minority from Hungary and The Czech Republic Initiative provided services and information based on the needs identified by the community. The following chart illustrates the initiative in action and gives a snapshot of some of the programs and services provided to, for and by the community.

Community Building Areas	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Designing the Project	Community Planning	Community Establishment	Community Sustainability
Community Development	Community focus groups Community and Hamilton Urban Core meetings	Meetings, workshops and information sessions directed at building capacity in the community: Mental Health and Wellness information Reducing Poverty for Roma Women Diabetes Awareness Meeting space for community meetings Creating Safe Environments Recreational Activities for Roma Youth Accessing Education/Financing GED test Advocacy/ financing college and university Early Years Support Teen Pregnancy Prevention Creating employment opportunities	Activities targeted at helping supporting community members in making Hamilton their home: Education/ Employment Information Sessions Immigration Meetings Essence banquet centre partnership – free meeting space ESL Classes – Jackson Square Oral Health Promotion and Education Session Roma Newsletter Sexual Health Information Sessions for teens Connect to Early Steps program at Hamilton Urban Core Advocacy/ Information about financing college/ university	

Community Building Areas	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Designing the Project	Community Planning	Community Establishment	Community Sustainability
Organizing and Advocacy of Institutional Change	<p>The Roma Community Initiative Information Sessions and focus groups</p> <p>Building Community Capacity Meetings, focus groups and information Sessions</p> <p>Creating Safe Environments</p>	<p>Mental Health and Wellness Workshop</p> <p>Recreational Activities for Roma Youth</p> <p>Creating Safe Environments</p>	<p>Organizing activities to advocate for change:</p> <p>The Role of Community Leaders Meetings & Focus Groups</p> <p>Meeting with Hamilton Culture and Recreation Department for children’s recreational programming</p> <p>Roma Newsletter</p> <p>Communication with the Roma Advocacy Centre Toronto and the Roma Community in Toronto</p> <p>Informational flyers about immigration were created in Czech and Hungarian</p>	
Community Research and Evaluation	<p>Community Feedback</p> <p>Community and Hamilton Urban Core develop benchmarks for the initiative</p>	<p>Developing appropriate evaluative tools and mechanisms</p>	<p>Participant evaluations</p>	

The Initiatives in Action

The Communities Together 2005 – 2008

This initiative provided an opportunity for communities who may not have otherwise met each other to network and share their stories. These communities were also able to work together on similar interests. The following table is an illustration of the work the communities did together.

Event Purpose/ Topics	Dates	Objectives	Highlights	Initial Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes
Recreational Opportunities for Children 5-30 participants	March 2005 June 2005 June 2005 November 2005	Accessing sports for children Where recreational opportunities are in the city What centres are available for sports activities Getting the Communities more involved in sports	The Community looked at existing g opportunities in the cities and looked at what they can do to develop new Community focus opportunities at Jamesville community centre	The communities where please because they can access Jamesville community centre for recreational /sport activities at no cost Discussed the many barriers to accessing existing program which are not language accessible or culturally sensitive with representatives from The City of Hamilton	
Training Opportunities for the Construction Industry 28 participants	January 2005	How to get into the job market? Resume Writing Linkages to Employment Institutional Communications and Partnerships Personal Support Worker Program Creating culturally sensitive programs	Threshold School of Building gave information and discussed resources, skills development, training for new immigrants, interview skills Accessing existing resources in the Community Skills development and training for new immigrants Reducing barriers Building Self Esteem Information about opportunities	Communities identified potential barriers might be language, transportation, finances, self esteem, commitment and punctuality	Many of the women from the Somali community completed the PSW program and are working here in Hamilton or in Alberta
ESL	September 2005	Breaking down language barriers	The Communities need better access to ESL classes	We are getting there slowly We need to break	Women are attending ESL classes at the City Centre

Event Purpose/ Topics	Dates	Objectives	Highlights	Initial Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes
20 participants		Owning the Initiative Building self Esteem and Self Reliance		down barriers	which were implemented based on the needs of these communities
Personal Support Worker Program 28 participants	October 2005 December 2005	Developing skills and employment opportunities Personal Support Worker Program Creating culturally appropriate programs	St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre explains their Personal Support Worker Program to the communities	Improving access to the resources available in the community	
The Sponsorship Process 28 participants	March 2006	Information about the sponsorship process Connecting with Sponsors Reflections on the Impact of this process and Settlement	Information about the sponsorship process, how it works as well as the pitfalls and challenges	Participants wanted more information and also wanted information or direction on how to assist with making the process better	The Coordinators continue to assist community members with completing the lengthy application process. The Coordinators also assist with connecting community members to lawyers
Funding and Spotlighting the Success of the Program 50 participants	April 12006	Funders working with communities Networking with other communities and agencies Existing programs and services how to improve them	Communities had the opportunity to showcase their accomplishments through the initiative and were given information about other funders and programs available Hamilton Community Foundation, United Way of Hamilton and Toronto are a few of the Funders present	Funders were impressed with the progress the initiatives have made	The Somali Community Women were given a fund to Support an ongoing cooking program

Shared Success

On June 7, 2007 these initiatives were honoured at the Association of Health Centres' "Landmark Second Stage of Medicare" conference a provincial event. The Coordinators accepted the EPIC awards for "Excellence in Primary Health Care", on behalf both communities and Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre.

Building on Community Strengths and Assets

The initial funding for this initiative ended in 2007. However Hamilton Urban Core and both communities continued to work together. There was sufficient evidence of the needs and assets in these communities. They reviewed the many successes of the initiatives and identified next steps which included using this model with other communities. It is time to further build on the steps that have been taken in phase three of the model and move forward into phase four, Community Sustainability. In order to move forward Hamilton Urban Core and both communities chose to focus on economic development and selected the Community Economic Development (CED) model to facilitate the movement into the next phase of development.

Community Economic Development is a community-based and community-directed process that explicitly combines social and economic development and is directed towards fostering the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing and health of communities. It is action taken locally by a community to provide economic opportunities and improve social conditions in a sustainable way. CED is also an alternative to conventional economic development with the understanding that problems facing communities – unemployment, poverty, job loss, environmental degradation and loss of community control – need to be addressed in a holistic and participatory way.

Both communities and Hamilton Urban Core identified that they aspire to be more self reliant and economically independent to truly participate in Canadian Society. Both communities identified the need for a greater level of fiscal and social independences and active participation in the community.

Hamilton Urban Core and both communities have developed partnerships. Each community has very unique assets which will be further enhanced to ensure the sustainability of the development already achieved. It is also at this phase that Hamilton Urban Core are prepared to welcome new and emerging communities who would benefit greatly from this model of change.

Based on the accomplishment and outcomes of this initiative and feedback, Hamilton Urban Core recognized that this initiative has been very good example of community development and change. Hamilton Urban Core is building on the success of these initiatives and will expand this initiative to assist other communities in their journey to establishing themselves within Hamilton and help them share their own tales.

“Mindig érzem a közelségedet, s ezt tudva, sosem vagyok egymagam”

– Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe²

² Translation from Hungarian to English: “It is the close connection to others that unwittingly lets me know I am never by myself” – Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, Poet, novelist, playwright, natural philosopher and diplomat 1749-1832