



MA'AN WRAPAROUND INITIATIVE

2022/23 ANNUAL REPORT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction & About Ma'an.....	2
Concept, Eligibility & Goals.....	3
Services Offered.....	4
Achievements & Statistics.....	5, 6
Key Successes.....	7, 8
Top Referrals.....	9
Challenging Areas.....	10, 11
Recommendations.....	11
Client Testimonials.....	12

INTRODUCTION

The Region of Peel boasts immense cultural diversity. Peel CAS ensures that children, youth, and families in Peel Region receive services that are inclusive and equitable. Our agency continues to collaborate with community organizations to develop culturally competent service models. Through enhanced community partnerships and cultural sensitivity, these models acknowledge and tackle the systemic barriers and oppression that racialized youth and families face.

CULTURALLY COMPETENT SERVICES: MA'AN

Ma'an is a partnership between Peel CAS and Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services (PICS) to serve the Arab communities in Peel. Ma'an launched in April 2021 with the goal of providing culturally appropriate services to Arab children, youth, and families. The word "Ma'an" means "together" in Arabic, which emphasizes the collaborative nature of our work with our partners and the families we support. Programs like Ma'an are at the heart of Peel CAS' overall goal to keep children at home with their families whenever possible and strengthen connections with community. The Ma'an wraparound service model was developed in consultation with focus groups, community agencies and staff from Peel CAS and PICS to ask how we could best support Arab communities. This feedback was incorporated into the Ma'an service model, to provide culturally competent services and support to our Arab families, children, and youth, with improved access to employment, housing, education, parenting, and mental health services.



CONCEPT OF ACTION

Eligibility: Families who are currently working with Peel CAS and speak Arabic and/or are from an Arab cultural background

How We Provide Support: The Peel CAS worker will refer families to the Ma'an program. A cultural facilitator will be assigned to each participating family. The cultural facilitator will work closely with the family, Peel CAS workers, and other community agencies to foster an environment of mutual understanding and to create wraparound services to support the needs of the family. The cultural facilitator provides case management, community engagement, system navigation, and advocacy through a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens. Ma'an provides families with culturally sensitive support and connects them to resources tailored to their unique needs.



MA'AN GOAL

The aim is to create a wraparound service model that provides culturally responsive services to families in their homes, and in rare cases where children or youth must be placed in care, they are provided with comprehensive reunification safety plans as soon as possible.

The Ma'an Wraparound Initiative seeks to:

- Assist Peel CAS in providing culturally competent services to Arabic families.
 - Strengthen relationships with the Arab community and raise awareness about family well-being.
 - Create opportunities for ongoing supportive services between the Arab communities and Peel CAS, including consultation and training components to facilitate collaboration.
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MA'AN SERVICES

Ma'an offers a variety of culturally centered services designed to meet the unique needs of families within the Arab community.

These services include:

- Joint visits with a Peel CAS worker and a Ma'an cultural facilitator to provide culturally centered context and support.
- Collaborating with families to create safety plans that ensure the safety of children and youth within the family environment.
- Connecting families to Arabic parenting and network support, as well as to employment, housing, education, and childcare resources.
- To support the mental health and well-being of families Ma'an works in partnership with community organizations to facilitate access to mental health services.
- To provide support with navigating immigration and settlement services, which can be particularly challenging for families within the Arab community who may face language and cultural barriers.

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Through these comprehensive services, Ma'an aims to empower families within the Arab community to access the resources and support they need to thrive and succeed.

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MA'AN ACHIEVEMENTS

Ma'an has exceeded its initial goals since its launch in February 2021, by receiving a total of 116 referrals for the last two years, including 64 referrals received between April 2022 and March 2023. These referrals were evenly distributed across the first, second, and fourth quarters of 2022-2023, with a slight decrease in the third quarter, as indicated by Figure 1.

Compared to the previous year, the number of referrals increased by 23% , which can be attributed to the successful internal and external outreach and promotion activities that raised awareness about the initiative and its services and the positive feedback that we continue to receive from service users.

The culturally centered services provided by Ma'an have helped families to navigate the Child Welfare system, access social support, and address parenting challenges that might impact their family relations, and the well-being of their children and youth. Furthermore, Ma'an has successfully bridged the cultural and language barriers that prevent some families from accessing the services they need.

By offering a range of services, including joint visits with Peel CAS workers, creating safety plans together with families, connecting them to Arabic parenting and network support, facilitating mental health services through community partnerships, and supporting them with navigating immigration and settlement services, Ma'an is an essential component of Peel CAS's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategy.

Ma'an's success in meeting its goals underscores the importance of culturally responsive services in addressing the unique needs of diverse communities.

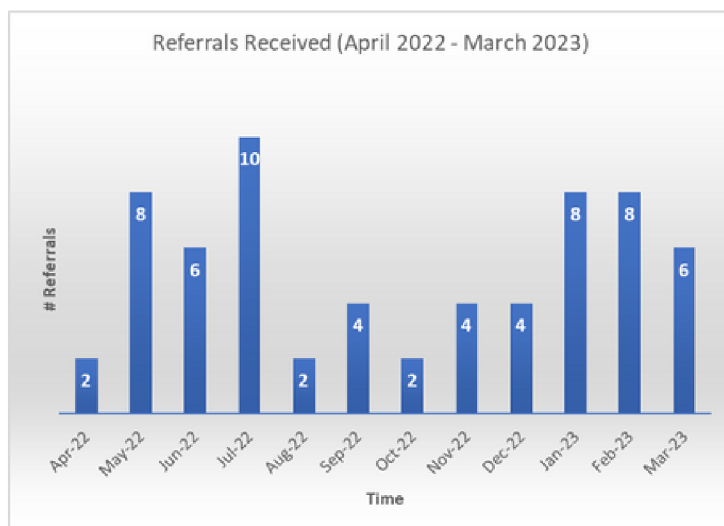


Figure 1. Number of Cases received by Ma'an from Apr 2022- Mar 2023

Date	Closed Cases
May-22	1
Jul-22	3
Sep-22	2
Oct-22	5
Nov-22	1
Dec-22	3
Jan-23	3
Feb-23	3
Mar-23	3
Total	24

Table 2. Number of Cases closed between April 2022 and March 2023

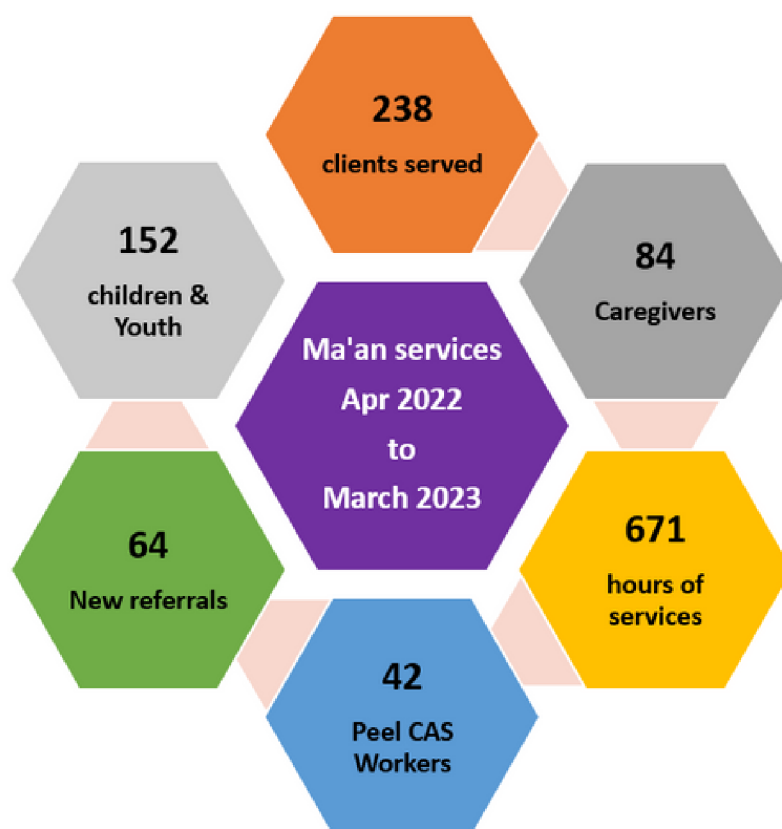


Table 3. Summary Stats of Ma'an cases

Month	No. of cases	No. of Clients	Hours of service
Apr-22	2	10	31
May-22	8	34	156
Jun-22	6	26	70
Jul-22	10	40	149
Aug-22	2	11	29
Sep-22	4	16	67
Oct-22	2	7	15
Nov-22	4	15	32
Dec-22	4	14	29
Jan-23	8	27	49
Feb-23	6	23	26
Mar-23	3	15	18
Total	61	238	671

KEY SUCCESSSES THIS YEAR

The Ma'an Initiative has been successful in achieving its goal of providing wraparound support to Arab families in Peel. One of the key successes has been in helping families understand the role of Peel CAS, identifying additional services in the community to meet the needs of the families, and providing culturally competent support. In collaboration with community partners we are also providing training and education to the Arab families who interact with our services. This has been essential in building trust and fostering positive relationships with families.

- Ma'an Initiative ran an online Parent Support Program, consisting of four weekly Arabic sessions for caregivers. This program has provided a safe space for the caregivers to share their parenting challenges, and successes, while being supported. The program was facilitated by an Arabic-Speaking Psychotherapist.
- The Cultural Worker played a significant role in building strong relationships with the caregivers. The caregivers shared that through this program they felt supported and their voices were heard.
- In November 2022, the Cultural Worker participated in the Erin Mills Connects Semi-Annual Community Check-in. This was a great opportunity to introduce Ma'an to the community partners and explain the goals of the initiative and the role of cultural facilitators.
- Ma'an delivered a presentation about Peel CAS to Arab refugee families hosted by the reception center of PICS, providing them with a better understanding of the role of Peel CAS in the child welfare system, as well as the role of Ma'an. This presentation helped to dismantle the misconceptions about Peel CAS' work and highlighted Ma'an as a culturally competent service.
- The cultural facilitator was able to utilize the Stability Fund that was provided by the Peel District School Board, to help children and youth access wellness activities, summer camps, psychoeducational assessment, counselling support and tutoring services. This extra fund helped to provide children and youth with stability, support, and positive connections to education and learning.





- The cultural worker continues to play a role in bridging the cultural gaps and helping service users to understand the child welfare system in Ontario and the role of Peel CAS. This understanding led to a positive parent engagement and willingness to work collaboratively with Peel CAS to achieve the necessary safety planning.
- The cultural worker maintained regular communication with Peel CAS workers throughout the process, including referrals receipt acknowledgment, frequent updates on cases, sharing resources with the workers, attending joint visits, submitting quarterly reports, and closing reports with outcomes and recommendations for each case. This has helped to ensure the continuity of support to the families and effective holistic service delivery.
- Ma'an continues to utilize the programs and services available at Polycultural to build a holistic approach to serving families, children and youth. Services include but not limited to: settlement, housing, employment, youth programs, LINC classes, etc.
- With the Ma'an wraparound program, we have developed a useful resource brochure for staff members. It is intended to assist staff in connecting Arab families with appropriate support services that are tailored to their specific cultural needs. With the help of this multi-lingual pamphlet, we can ensure that our Arab families are able to access culturally sensitive and relevant services.
- The cultural facilitator succeeded in establishing a collaborative relationship with faith leaders from different faith communities to provide Ma'an families with social and emotional support.
- The Ma'an wraparound program recognizes the importance of communication within the Arab community. For this reason, we offer translations/interpretations in both Arabic and English for all our communications. By promoting inclusivity and fostering understanding through language, we strive to ensure that our messages and information are accessible to all. Through these translations, we hope to bridge any language barriers and create a welcoming environment.

TOP REFERRALS

It is important to note that while these are the top referrals processed under the Ma'an initiative, the needs of Ma'an families are unique, and referrals are based on their specific circumstances. The top referrals that have been processed are, but not limited to:

Settlement Services:

- Settlement Counsellors for affordable Housing/ Financial aid services/ Job opportunities in the community.

Mental Health Support:

- Crises Counselling / Mental Health Counselling & Therapy/ Parenting Coaching

Parenting Support:

- Free Arabic Parenting programs/Parent Counsellors/ Parents & caregivers' workshops and webinars

Youth Programs:

- Programs for children and youth for activities and job search.

Legal Aid Services**Faith Communities:**

- Islamic Foundations/ Religious base counselling/ Church community services.

Culturally appropriate Social Networks:

- Arabic women social groups/ Arabic newcomers support groups/ Social support groups for children with special needs.

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Settlement services, mental health support, and parenting support services have been the most featured referral outlets, accounting for 50% of the services provided in the first year of the initiative.

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CHALLENGING AREAS

The challenges continue to be similar to what was reported last year including:

- The lack of cultural awareness may lead to cultural conflicts between Arab clients and Peel CAS workers, due to the clients' lack of understanding of the child welfare system, and also the worker's limited knowledge of the Arabic culture. The Ma'an cultural facilitator plays an important role in bridging the cultural gap between Peel CAS workers and the families, and ensuring that families, youth, and children are receiving culturally competent services by Peel CAS and PICS.
- As privacy and confidentiality are highly valued in Arab culture, Arab families do not like to discuss personal matters outside of their families. Sometimes this becomes a challenge when families need support and Peel CAS workers try to connect them to informal and/or formal support networks. Many times they don't consent to have other people involved in supporting them. In these cases, the cultural facilitator explains to the family the importance of having a support network as part of the safety planning and helps them to explore options that they are comfortable with.
- Most of the Ma'an families have limited English proficiency, which hinders their access to funded services, since those services are not available in Arabic. Examples include: Legal Aid, Ontario Work services, Health services, etc. The cultural facilitator continues to explore ways of supporting the families either by providing interpretation over the phone, connecting them with Arabic speaking settlement workers who can assist them in navigating the system, or advocating for them to have access to interpreters when available.



- The lack of culturally competent community services to meet the unique needs of the Arab families, such as: mental health counselling, parenting coaching and support, crisis counselling, and co-parenting counselling continue to be a big challenge. The cultural facilitator continues to reach out to community agencies and service providers to establish collaboration and explore if there are any of the above-mentioned services available for Ma'an families.
- As an organization that recognizes the significance of collecting data, there should be a special focus on developing an agency-led approach to collecting identity-based data, with a particular focus on Arab identities. By collecting this valuable information, the Ma'an wraparound program will be able to better understand and assist Arab families. It will enable us to provide more effective support to our Arab clients and recognize their unique strengths.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maintain effective communication with Peel CAS workers and the cultural facilitator to effectively share and exchange updates and information on a regular basis about cases and Ma'an service delivery. This includes communicating via emails, phone calls, virtual, in-person and other agreed upon social media platforms.
- Recruit Arabic speaking volunteers to assist Ma'an families with their needs, such as interpretation, transportation, and completing online applications, etc.
- Provide cultural and other supportive training to Peel CAS workers to assist them in working effectively with Arabic clients.
- Build partnerships and collaboration with community organizations to enhance and strengthen Ma'an service delivery model.
- Our Ma'an wraparound program continues to value the input and voices of our community and past families. As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we will continue to actively seek feedback on our work and services. It is crucial for us to maintain ongoing engagement with the community in order to foster trust and ensure that our programs are able to meet their needs.



CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

These translated testimonials from Ma'an clients highlight the positive impact that Ma'an has had on the families they have supported. The families expressed appreciation for the comfort and trust they felt in sharing their stories with Ma'an workers. They also expressed gratitude for the empowerment and encouragement they received to seek out the support they needed, such as counselling for their well-being services.

"Although I speak English, and I could navigate and access the services that I need, working with you was very helpful. I felt comfortable sharing my story knowing that I can trust you and that my voice will be heard "

" Thank you for talking to me, empowering me, and encouraging me to put more effort in taking care of myself and my well-being by seeing a therapist! "

"I felt like you are a family friend! I was very comfortable contacting you when I needed help. Thank you for your continued support for my family and myself. "

" The Peel CAS worker is very kind and understanding, but I would prefer to work with Peel CAS through you as I feel comfortable, heard and understood when talking to you about the family's issues".

" I can't thank you enough for your support along with the Peel CAS worker "
