

Multi-Agency Partnership (MAP)

Minutes of the HOUSING WORKING GROUP Meeting on Thursday October 25, 1:00pm – 3:00pm
Canadian Red Cross: 3400 Lake City Way, Burnaby

Attended: Loren Balisky (Kinbrace)
Doug Peat (Journey Home)
Saleem Spindari (MAP, MOSAIC)
Patricia Mahecha (former Inland Refugee Society)
Theresa Harding (Metro Vancouver HPS)
Khim Tan (Options)
Raul Gatica (Kinbrace)
Patricia Mahecha (IRS)
Celine Mauboules (HSA of BC)
Nathan Wright (bc211)
Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC FV)
Peter Prediger (Inasmuch)
Tammy Johnson (Inasmuch)
Richard Belcham (Inasmuch)
Barry Growe (former Canadian Red Cross)
Rami (SOS Vancouver office)
Nasra Mire (SOS manager)
Alice Sundberg (MAP HWG Housing Liaison)
Guest: Anthony Slinkert (COA Netherlands)
Jenny Moss (MAP)

Apologies: James Grunau (Journey Home), Mariana Martinez Vieyra (MAP co-chair, VAST)

Welcome

Co-Chair: Loren Balisky

- Welcome and Introductions

New members and guests:

Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC Fraser Valley)

Alexandra is managing MOSAIC's Stream B services in the Fraser Valley including setting up a new MAP which will exist in close relationship to MAP BC.

Nathan Wright (bc211)

Nathan is a longstanding member of MAP and ED of bc211 that provides information and telephone support to refugee claimants on first arrival or later. Bc211 receives many calls from claimants seeking housing on arrival.

Barry Growe (formerly Canadian Red Cross)

Barry is interested in finding out more about the work of HWG. He has experience organizing disaster responses for the Red Cross and managing projects.

Alice Sundberg (MAP Housing Liaison)

Alice has just taken up a position with MAP to sort out referrals for housing (see notes below). She comes from a background as a Consultant in planning, strategy and communications.

Anthony Slinkert (COA – Netherlands)

Anthony is responsible for asylum seeker processing in southern Netherlands. He presented to MAP earlier and his presentation is attached.

- Outline and additions to the Agenda – approved
- Review of Minutes of Meeting Sept 27 - approved

1. REPORTS:**Update and next steps - Towards a Housing Solution for Refugee Claimants in BC (Province of BC funded project)**

Loren: \$70,000 provided by MJTT until March 31, 2019 for the following 4 projects that will be reported on at each meeting:

a) Capacity building at MAP

This funding is to increase coordinator's hours by 2 days a week for her to be able to support the work of the Housing Working Group and the new Information Working Group.

b) Coordinating housing agencies – hiring of Alice Sundberg

Alice has been hired to sort out the process of referral of refugee claimants to available housing and settlement.

- She has been reaching out to many agencies and individuals to set up meetings etc. to gain information.
- Her role is to listen to the voices of experience
- Each meeting will be based on the same questions to support a consistent approach, though she can follow up.
- She will investigate the role of different agencies and report back on
 - what's working and what's not
 - with demise of Inland Refugee Society what do we do now?
 - look for creative way to solve the crisis of how RC's find housing
- Then the HWG will take steps to put a creative solution in place with funding.
- Alice will be working closely with Doug (Journey Home) who has been exploring the same confusing situation for RC's, in order to eliminate duplication – and to fill gaps.

c) Theresa Harding- Chair: MAP HWG Asset Mapping Committee

MJTT also funded an **asset mapping research project** so that MAP HWG can learn more about the situation of refugee claimants in the region, and what services exist or are lacking for them.

Theresa, as chair, reported that the committee:

- From MAP HWG: Theresa, Loren, Khim, Patricia, Nathan, Jenny (non-voting support)
New volunteers: Amy Huwang (Canadian Heritage)
Kingsley Eke (lived experience)
Nicole Marques Stinson (BC Housing)
Jenny Francis (Langara / research experience)
Dena Kae Beno (Housing & Homelessness Coordinator, Abbotsford)
Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC – Fraser Valley / research experience)
- Finalized terms of reference for Asset Mapping – will look at team roles, the communication plan and a set of criteria for proposal review at the meeting later 25/120.
- Proposals for the position/work of researcher will be accepted until Oct 31 – please forward the RFP to anyone you know who may be interested.
- Once the researcher has been identified he/she will begin work at end November on asset mapping
- UBC's School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) has been in dialogue with us and they may help with the next steps after the research is completed; i.e. formulating the action steps

Question: How far up the valley will the asset mappings go?

Theresa: As far as Hope.

d) Jenny Moss - Public education

MJTT provided some smaller funds to launch a Public Education Campaign to counter the negative image RC's have been gaining recently in the media.

An **Information Working Group** has been formed that meets bi-weekly and is tasked with:

- a) designing and critiquing a new MAP logo and website
- b) planning an education campaign

The latter will need more funding so the IWG will be consulting Canadian Heritage about support.

We envisage achieving some smaller PR goals in the next 4-5 months and then embarking on a bigger campaign once we have the capacity.

Questions/Comments:

Celine (HSA): BC Housing had a toolkit around building support – we can ask Nicole Stinson (on Asset Mapping Cttee)

Doug (Journey Home) will introduce a PR person to Jenny to help with messaging.

2. Report on Presentations in the community

The following presentations have been made by HWG members recently:

AMSSA BCSIS (16 October) - Jenny

AMSSA organized a day for government agencies including IRCC (Federal) and MJTT (Provincial) to meet with settlement agencies from all over BC to report on BC Settlement and Integration Services (BCSIS)

There were reports from a federal level as well as inter-ministerial and provincial.

MAP HWG was invited as a recipient of a special grant under MJTT

Loren & Jenny described the problem (refugee housing shortage) and what has been achieved to date including the Housing Forum, Report, HWG committee formation and work since funds from MJTT were secured.

It was a very useful opportunity to meet government staff and other agencies and we also participated in creating a list of priorities that needed attention.

Inter-governmental meeting on 19 October - Saleem

MJTT invited MAP to talk abt. our funding under Housing Solutions.

At the meeting there were representatives from Vancouver, New Westminster, Richmond, Surrey (many were social planners), IRCC and provincial government.

Saleem and Loren had an opp. to talk about the Reimagining paper – a centre for RC's with supported housing.

It was the first time for many to hear about MAP – so the opportunity both strengthened and further extended MAP partnerships.

Heard from **CHIMO Community Services (Richmond)** about opportunities to develop housing on unused lots. – CHIMO has been invited to MAP meetings.

Discovered more inter-govt. cttees and invited them to present their ideas to MAP.

Residential Tenancy Branch Information Sessions for MAP – Jenny

Thanks to Celine MAP has been in touch with Lesley Pollard at Residential Tenancy Branch and free workshops are being arranged for both housing providers, agencies and RC's re: rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords and forms of redress.

There are 3 workshops available now:

1a) **Information for Newcomers to BC** (basic tenancy information)

At Journey Home on Tuesday Nov 20 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

1b) Information for Newcomers to BC (basic tenancy information)

At DIVERSEcity: Thursday, November 29th from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

2) What Support Organizations Should Know

At Journey Home: Thursday Dec 6 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Please contact Jenny if you, or someone you know, would like to attend.

3. Discussion - hiring a point person for refugee claimant housing cause

Loren invited the committee to engage in a creative conversation around solutions – to think out the idea of having a centre with support services more thoroughly, and also where we can find support.

e.g. - Should we be sharing Reimagining Doc with MAP?

- What should be our role in pitching idea to provincial govt once funds run out in March?

- Could we respond to the need for a contingency plan (for a sudden influx) by suggesting a centre for RC's?

- The **HWG co-chairs have limited capacity** - do we need to find funds for one person to take the lead?

- could we ask UNHCR to do more? Azadeh presented the work done in Brazil – maybe UNHCR could see a role for itself here in Canada? Aim to set up a meeting before Christmas.

Saleem: when we prepared for the Housing Forum we brought people from outside the sector – MJTT said no-one responded to RFP, but we do have a plan – so that would be a centre piece of a solution. Let's talk collaboratively without just thinking of our organization.

Peter: Are you sensing that there's an opportunity for MAP to respond?

Saleem: Ministries usually only respond when there is a crisis – e.g. photo of Alan Kurdi. But now we are sensing a shift. The provincial govt. has responded actively to the needs of temporary foreign workers, so if we have a plan in place then the govt. is listening now.

Celine: loves the collaboration (of HWG) and the plan – but who is the lead? And we need a strategy as to people's roles.

Khim: need to find a champion to take it on – need funding to create a position or 2 to realize the dream.

We should be proactive in having a plan to create a centre and a team ready based on 'the dream' – not wait for a crisis.

Doug: He has a day/week to work on housing – his priority is to establish permanent housing – though transitional housing inevitably necessary.

He has already accomplished the following:

- Working at finalizing a draft MOU with CHIMO
- Discussions with housing providers who are expanding – though this needs to be supported.
- Discussion with people around national standards – waivers for size of families
- Church housing – had many conversations
- Also spoke to for-profit groups – who want to engage if there's \$\$ in it.

Theresa: Strategic doc that will emerge from the asset mapping project should provide a basis for our move ahead.

Patricia – Federal government will listen to the idea if it is presented now

Raul – we need to protect against project being co-opted by another group -

We need to be careful about dream, but we also need to talk about permanent housing. At the moment we have nothing specific about how we will create permanent housing, what will it look like?

Loren: plan should include transitional housing as well as permanent

Nathan – information/referrals piece needs to be looked at – to avoid frustration level of round and round referrals.

Peter: who is providing the referral?

Celine: RC's need a centralized referral agency.

Doug: but not too centralized

Alice – perhaps we could coordinate regular housing sessions as shelters do. They share with providers who of their clients are needing more permanent housing. It works well, but there are always too many clients for the supply.

Nasra – need a stepping stone – emergency – transitional - permanent

Jenny: is there space for RC's in the GARS beds at ISS? No – limited (3-6 beds depending on how many GARS are arriving) but she will ask again and send info about what's available.

Celine – need a vision and a goal – structure needed.

HPS funds are available but need time to apply for funds for anything like a central hub.

H.A.S. has a 'Homefront' – a backbone to support their work – maybe in new year HWG could make a funding ask for this support.

Loren: do we need to ask MAP?

Saleem: MAP needs to know and approve – e.g. CHIMO MOU. Should be presented first.

In the spirit of collaboration.

Loren/Saleem: Proposed that anyone who wants to move this document forward works on a group – after MAP November meeting.

Doug: when should we bring on experts to help?

Saleem – they were invited to HWG as well as to Asset Committee. But be careful not to invite too early when we're not sure of our model.

Loren: we can discuss before next meeting

Richard: Don't forget short term needs!

Loren request if for new members/visitors had opinions?

Barry – 1. asked the group if we are looking at other countries' models, e.g. Israel?

Loren: Anthony gave us a presentation from Netherlands today and we know that many regions neighboring refugee producing countries make huge efforts, but we haven't studied this specifically.

2. are we asking RC's to go to other parts of BC?

Loren: RC's do go to towns farther and farther out because of costs, but they always have to be near Vancouver because of the legal processes that now take up to 2 years to complete.

Anthony – in Netherlands the mayors asked Federal government to step in as they couldn't cope.

Fact: -80% of newcomers to Netherlands are RC's

- they try and find transition housing everywhere: including snowbird housing, Airbnb

Suggests that we need a welcoming center but we must also work with the community to develop other housing.

Peter – we need to coordinate referrals from the beginning

NEWS:

Raul – Kinbrace has finished units – 2 are available – new program: **Permanent Housing project** – to help most vulnerable to stay at Kinbrace for 2 months – then move out to permanent house. So Kinbrace provides transitional housing but end goal is permanent housing.

Families are obliged to move out wherever we can find housing after 2 months – there are few options.

Closing – next meeting at MOSAIC – November 22nd at 1pm
