

Multi-Agency Partnership (MAP)

Thursday, February 22, 2018

Location: MOSAIC

Attendees: Saleem Spindari (MOSAIC); Etab Saad (MOSAIC); Zargoona Wakil (MOSAIC); Jeanne Helm (MOSAIC); Andrew Kuipers (Kinbrace); Fran Gallo (Kinbrace); Angelica Alejandro (VAST); Mariana M. Vieyra (VAST); Sabrina Dumitra (AMSSA); Peter Prediger (inasmuch); Tammy Johnson (inasmuch); Julia Wu (bc211); Nathan Wright (bc211); James Grunau (Journey Home); Rainer Nicdao (MSDPR); Salima Jamal (MSDPR); Nadia Clarke (MSDPR); Iris Solorzano (Options); Ana Machado (PIRS); Matthew Browne (IRB); Mona Hassania (SOS-ISS); Dominic Fung (Ministry of Jobs, Trade, and Technology); Sylvie Viger (MJTT); Soraya Galdamer (MCC); Ahmad Nakhaei (Volunteer VAST/SOS); Mario Ayala (WCMC); Yola Vargas (FBC); Leanne Hodaly (IRCC); Jessica Sardi (IRCC); Katherine de Visser (IRCC);
Conference Call: Jenny Moss (MAP)

Apologies:

Tassilie Dent/City University Seattle, Mandana Saliman

9:30 am Welcome

Co-chair: Andrew Kuipers, Kinbrace House

Introductions

The Agenda was outlined and approved.

The January Minutes were approved

9:45 am Housing and Labor Market Trends

Presentation by: Dan Hiebert, UBC Department of Geography

- Dan's presentation is available through open access in the Canadian Journal of Urban Research, December 2017. <http://cjur.uwinnipeg.ca/index.php/cjur/article/view/96>
- The purpose of this presentation is to look at the long term picture for refugee integration in Vancouver by answering the question: 'What happens in the long term for people who come to Vancouver like refugees?'
- We conclude that actually the future is quite positive economically for refugees. This may be due to a number of factors:
 - a) refugee claimants are very resilient and quite self-sufficient
 - b) typically well-educated
 - c) receive lots of support from settlement agencies and other supporters
- But problems do exist:
 - a) refugees have often experienced violence that causes psychological consequences
 - b) their careers are disrupted by their experiences and need to flee
 - c) they encounter a new language

- d) systemic barriers in the labor market e.g. discrimination against visible minorities
- e) the differences culturally that exist between their homes and Canada

- This research is based on data provided by CIC and the 2011 Census Data. Information was matched by comparing the landing files of refugees arriving between 1980 and 2011.
- Information for refugees from 2011 was presented in one big cache – there was no separation for GARS, Claimants etc. But this level of detail will be possible when we analyze 2016 and 2018 census data.

- **2011 Census Data**

Major variables in the study:

- a) 3 broad questions relating to job security, economic well-being and housing
- b) Information was published for the centers of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver
- c) Refugees were split into 3 broad categories:
 - arrivals 2006 - 2011
 - arrivals in the 90's
 - arrivals in the 80's

- **EMPLOYMENT RATIO**

In 2011 the overall employment figure for males in Canada was 77%

Compare to the situation in 2011 for:

Male refugees arriving in the last 5 years: 62%

Male refugees arriving between 5 – 10 years ago match the national ratio (77%)

Male refugees arriving 10 + years ago exceed the national employment ratio

For females the Canada overall employment ratio was 68%

Compare to:

Female refugees arriving in the last 5 years: 47%

Female refugees arriving 5 – 10 years ago: still below national average

Female refugees arriving 10 + years ago meets and exceeds national rate.

- **HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

Low income statistics:

In 2011 the percentage of all Canadian workers classified as low income was 17 – 18% (1 in 5)

Compare to the situation in 2011 for:

Recently arrived refugees the percentage was 42% (a high level)

Those arriving more than 5 years ago: 32%

Those arriving 10 + years ago: just a little higher than the national ratio.

NOTE: Because Toronto attracts more than 50% of Canada's refugees and has more services and supports their long term low income ratio is the same as Canada's.

High income statistics:

In 2011 the percentage of all Canadian workers classified as high income was 55%

Compare to the situation in 2011 for:

Recently arrived refugees the percentage was only ½ %

In the long term almost half of refugees gained above average income. This figure relates very closely to the situation for refugees in the housing market which for refugees is highly polarized.

HOUSING

A 2016 Angus Reid poll asked how important is it to own a home to feel Canadian?

In general 59% of Canadians agreed home ownership was important.

For immigrants generally who have been in Canada less than 5 years 75% agreed that home ownership helped them feel more Canadian. There is a strong drive to home ownership for immigrants who want to feel they belong.

Ownership statistics in Vancouver

Of the total population 7/10 households own their own home

Recently arrived refugees the percentage was 24% (that is a very high figure)

Refugees arriving more than 5 – 10 years ago: 45%

Refugees arriving 10 + years ago: 57%

Refugees arriving 20 + years ago: 66/67% (just a fraction below the national ratio)

Refugees do well in home acquisition.

Pressure financially in terms of housing costs for refugees

Of the total population 30% spend more than 30% of their income on housing. For refugees this figure is much higher and those that have been in Vancouver the longest still spend more than 40% of their income on housing.

Additionally, renters experience a very high degree of financial pressure

CONCLUSION OF 2011 CENSUS DATA RESEARCH:

Refugees experience tough times at the beginning of their time living in Vancouver on all 3 counts. However by 10 years of residency they are quite self-sufficient and by 20 years they are virtually equivalent to the national population.

These facts dispel the idea that refugees will always need government assistance.

However the success rates for refugees coming to Vancouver in comparison with other Canadian centers is not great; because of the housing costs.

2016 CENSUS DETAIL

This census provides information on where refugees have typically come from over the years and where they live.

The analysis looked at refugees arriving in the 80's, 90's, 2000's and 2010 +

A major trend was that for the earlier years refugees predominantly came from Eastern Europe and Vietnam, but that radically shifted to Western Asia: Iran, Iraq etc., especially recently.

Top source countries per decade:

- 80's: Vietnam, Poland, Iran, El Salvador, Czech Republic
- 90's: Iran, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Vietnam, Poland, India
- 2000's: Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, China, Colombia
- Recently: Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, China

Where do refugees live?

Generally for all classes of refugees over the last 35 years the highest concentrations can be found in East Vancouver, South Burnaby, New Westminster and Surrey.

Vancouver generally has a very low percentage of refugees because of costs. North Surrey and Burnaby (Edmonds area) have very high concentrations of refugees. The information can also be broken down by source country.

Information shows that GAR's generally move to other parts of the lower mainland or the country. Over time all refugees move to better neighbourhoods.

DATA FROM IRCC

Labour market rates for men and women:

GAR's – are a little lower employed than national average

Privately sponsored refugees: are a little higher employed than national average

Claimants: are also a little lower employed than national average

National Average: 76% employed

Immigrants generally: 73% employed

Landing and Tax Data

Information was taken from tax returns of 2015

Refugees who arrived in 2015: very low income reported

Refugees with 15 years + in Canada have nearly the same income as Canadian generally

GARS have the greatest income challenges

Claimants have the best outcomes – also due to their resilience.

Educational achievement of the children of refugees

Refugee children who have lived in Canada for less than 12 years: 24% have a university degree.

More than 12 years:

Privately sponsored refugee families: 32%

GARS & Claimants: 29%

3rd generation Canadians generally earn \$46,000 per year on average

Children of refugees earn \$40,000 – \$43,000 (claimant children slightly lower)

OVERALL CONCLUSION

In the long run refugees do well in their settlement into Canada – there are some exceptions like the children of refugee claimants – where we must inject more resources

Questions still exist such as:

- a) How much is a result of policy and support?
- b) What services or assistance could be provided better?

Prof Hiebert asked MAP members to contact him with recommendations in order to inform the analysis of the 2016 data.

Questions:

Q: How are Syrian refugees coping with the Vancouver housing crisis?

A: Need to be studied more. 1800 arrived before the May 2016 census so we can look at the beginning

of their journey and compare with censuses to take place in the 2020's. Probable that a spectrum of results will emerge.

Q: Is the issue of children of refugee claimants not doing as well as others related to problems with access to support? If there is a relation here then a case could be made to improve access.

Comment:

Dominic Fung (MJTT) The comparison of GARS and claimants may relate to the different times in their refugee experience when they suffered disruption. GARS probably have more time and support once they land.

Q: Is there any way that the impact of different immigration/refugee legislation over the years could account for variable results?

A: Definitely there is missing information – as well as taking into account the different situations in refugee homelands. There is tightened border control, a reduction in services to GARS – but none of this shows up in the data.

Q: Is there information on the success or otherwise of refugees in their first year of arrival?

A: This is not available in the way the data is received.

Suggestion: data about access to help on arrival would be useful.

10:30 Saleem represented the MAP group in recognizing **Dominic Fung (MJTT)** and his great contributions over the years. Dominic has always been a tireless advocate and support to refugees. Dominic entered the field in 1980 at MOSAIC. He is retiring – a gift from MAP was presented and Dominic thanked everyone.

BREAK

11 AM: Inland Refugee Board's Designated Representative and Interpreter Programs

Presentation by: Matthew Browne, Registrar: Common Services, IRB

Matthew presented a request for interested individuals to step forward to be considered for the IRB's Designated Rep and Interpreter Programs.

Designated Representative Program

Such a person stands in for a claimant who does not understand the IRB hearing process – e.g. an unaccompanied child, individuals who are mentally challenged.

Their role is to instruct counsel on the needs of the claimant.

The experience is a great opportunity to learn more about the IRB process and the position would appeal to people who can work with all stakeholders.

Requirements:

- 18 years +
- Canadian citizen or permanent resident?

- Must understand the proceedings
- No conflict of interest with the claimant or the IRB

Typically the IRB recruits academics, other kinds of legal counsel, social workers, and increasingly more mental health and settlement workers.

Process for applicants

- Security screening
- Placed on a list and may be asked to assist in a number of contexts: hearings, detention hearings.
- Notice to appear may be long or short
- No training is provided – but when a number of reps are contracted at the same time then Information Sessions are arranged. Individuals accepted will receive a telephone call.
- Some groups or companies (e.g. pro-bono law firms) can join together – but security screening is always individual.

Stipend: \$250 - \$400 per case

Information is available on the IRB website at <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/Eng/BoaCom/references/LegJur/Pages/GuideIdSi07.aspx>

Question:

Q: How can the designated rep be effective if he/she doesn't know the claimant's story?

A: Counsel is required to provide information to the des rep. Sometimes there is not much time to learn anything but in other cases there may be access earlier and with an interpreter.

Interpreter Program

It is the legal right of claimants to understand all the IRB proceedings in their own language.

Requirements:

- Interpreter applicants are tested for language ability
- Security screening

Process

- Accepted applicants go on a roster – used in rotation
- Interpreters cannot summarize – they must interpret word for word
- Sometimes the job is very complex and challenging, other times the claimant may be virtually bilingual and doesn't need much assistance.
- There is lots of jargon – interpreters must understand acronyms from the home country or terminology relevant to e.g. political or religious institutions and ideas.
- Neutral – may not allow personal bias to interfere
- Sometimes interpreters are asked to provide simultaneous translation – e.g. when counsel is speaking at length.
- There is no training provided (note there is an excellent Interpreter's Program in Vancouver)
- Licencing is not required.

Questions:

Q: It appears that interpreters sometimes advise clients.

A: This does happen because the interpreter may be the person that the claimant spends a lot of time with. But interpreters are not allowed to advise or provide an opinion.

Q: What cultural training is provided to board members?

A: Board members are adept at rephrasing questions or asking the interpreter to seek more clarification.

Q: What is the payment?

A: same as to Designated Representatives.

If interested please contact Matthew at Matthew.Browne@irb-cisr.gc.ca and he will put you in contact with the relevant Manager.

11:20 - NOMINATIONS FOR CO-CHAIR POSITION AT MAP

With Andrew Kuiper's departure to Alberta at the end of March MAP requires a new co-chair.

It is important that the co-chairs overlap so Saleem kindly agreed to stay on until June 2019

There are three nominations:

- Sabrina Dumitra – AMSSA
- Iris Solorzano – Options
- Mariana Martinez Vieyra – VAST

ACTION: Any nominee should send Jenny (MAP) a statement of their relevant experience for the position, and why they would like to be a co-chair of MAP.

This information will be shared before the next meeting at which time a formal vote will occur.

PLEASE NOTE: Only MAP members can vote – one per organization.

The elected co-chair will serve until June 2020.

11:30 – AGENCY UPDATES

- **Dominic Fung (MJTT)**

A Ministry call for new funding available in June/July will go out late March / early April

- **Rainer Nicdao (Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction)**

Family Poverty Reduction Consultations taking place:

March 10th at 10:30 am at RayCam Community Center (doors open at 10 am)

March 20th at 6:30 pm at Heritage Hall (doors open at 5:30 pm)

- **Ahmed – VAST**

Free movie screenings – please share costs.

- **Ann (MOSAIC)**

Information workshops – more details on MOSAIC's website:

Tax clinics coming up March 12 – April 20.

Priority given to refugee claimants

- **Iris (Options)**

Claims up in Surrey

2nd Resource Fair for Claimants being hosted with MOSAIC

March 10 – City Center Library, Surrey.

Unfortunately all booths are now taken.

NEW: services for GARS and claimants will co-locate in a new clinic in Surrey.

Mario Ayala will be managing.

More information soon.

- **Suzan (PIRS)**

English language classes starting soon in Surrey with Imoja, and in New Westminster.

Free childcare provided for children aged 18 months – 5 years.

Plus new Spring Break Care program for Arabic speaking immigrant parents of children aged 3 – 5 to be held at Seymour School.

- **Maria (Kiwassa)**

Clinic in March

Food Bank is open every second and fourth Friday at 3 pm.

Specifically for LGBT refugees – but open to everyone.

New settlement worker

- **Abaji (MOSAIC)**

Annual job fair April 18 at the Croatian Cultural Center (off Commercial Drive)

Refugee Employment Service working to provide services to help claimants find jobs in BC.

- **Mona (ISS-SOS)**

Received 50 claims this month

Saturday support groups are ongoing from 10 am – 4 pm for new and old claimants.

Upcoming: Health Services and Settlement Orientation provided with lunch.

PLEASE NOTE: Because Inland Refugee Society is temporarily closed SOS is receiving lots of housing requests. SOS does NOT provide housing services so please use BC211 or refer to other provider.

- **Marianna VAST**

Also receiving many housing requests

VAST is providing emotional support at Welcome Center – Wednesday group

Reading Recommendation: 'Your heart is as big as your fist' / Martina Scholtens (doctor from Bridge Clinic)

- **Matthew (IRB)**

In response to questions about delays in processing

PLEASE send in questions about delays to Jenny at MAP who will forward them as a batch to IRB

- **YOLA (First Baptist Church)**

They are opening their doors for shelter from 9 pm – 7 am during this cold weather.

- **Mario (Welcome Center Medical Clinic)**

Has opened housing space. Long waiting lists.

Waiting for their licence to open a new clinic in Surrey for claimants. Also, opening in 4 weeks – a new pharmacy and medical clinic close to Patterson Skytrain Station.

- **Sabrina (AMSSA)**

Wednesday (Feb 21) provided training for the settlement sector – will post the course online for agencies who support claimants.

National Settlement Council meeting in mid-June. AMSSA would like to collect feedback from MAP to take to this meeting.

- **Nathan (BC211)**

Please advise of any changes to your agency information in order to keep the guide up to date.

- **Fran (READY tour)**

READY tour Friday 23

Next tour: March 9

Comment: All hearings being postponed – most claimants were waiting 15 – 18 months, and now IRB has said the wait time is 20 months.

Suggestion: re-form MAP Housing Working Group or hold a one-day workshop.

- **Saleem (MOSAIC)**

Forum on housing coming up soon. Invitations will be sent out via MAP.

12:00 pm Evaluation and Adjournment

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 22 at ISS of BC Welcome Centre.