



MAP HOUSING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Thursday February 28, 1pm at MOSAIC: 5575 Boundary Road, Vancouver

PRESENT:

Tammy Johnson, Peter Prediger and Richard Belcham (inasmuch)
Loren Balisky, Raul Gatica and Derek Chu (Kinbrace)
James Grunau, Co-Chair (Journey Home)
Doug Peat (Journey Home)
Alice Sundberg (Consultant)
Cherie Enns (Pomegranate)
Nasra Mire (SOS)
Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC)
Nathan Wright (BC211)
Theresa Harding (Metro Vancouver Community Entity HPS)
Jenny Moss, Barry Grove and Melissa Kwan (MAP)

Regrets: Celine Mauboules (HSABC)

Co-Chair: Loren Balisky

Loren welcomed everyone
Introductions were made
 Outline and approval of Agenda – Approved
 Minutes from January 24th meeting – Approved

Housing Continuum for refugee claimants - agreed nomenclature

Loren reviewed the Housing Continuum Report and discussed the nomenclatures that have been adjusted. He specifically went through the three categories: shelter, transitional and permanent. Loren opened the report for discussion.

Raul: What is considered a community house? In some of the houses I know, people can stay 1 or 2 months without paying rent. But are these houses considered a community house or not? In reality I think that it is a temporary house, one that is used for only 1-2 months.

Doug: If it's a transitional house, it is a good idea to identify women-only transitional housing as part of the continuum? Because this could be an issue. For the permanent, some refugees are part of the supported housing. Whether we should add those two to the continuum.

Theresa: Should that be considered a part of number one, permanent?

James: Is it big enough for refugee claimants to be considered one category?

Alice: We could say with or without supports in parentheses.

Theresa: People who can afford to purchase market housing are no longer in need of housing support from the RC community.

Cherie commented on how RC's can still be RC's at the point when they can afford market housing.

Alice: We could clarify that concept in the introduction.

Loren: Yes, we can do this by adding the word "arriving" in the first sentence of the report: "this is the proposed housing continuum for RC's *arriving* in BC."

Alexandra: Is it not convention status for RC's who have arrived in Jordan first and then here, and then they already made a claim, so having gone through secondary migration? So it's not pre-convention status?

Loren: They cannot have both statuses at work. They're screened already if they have not received convention status.

Doug: Is there an advantage for 'meanwhile space' to be listed as separate from transitional? Meanwhile space, like couch surfing?

Loren: We are trying to get rid of couch surfing. We are talking about informal couch surfing.

Theresa: Couch surfing is not in the housing continuum, though if it were, there might be formal responses to housing needs for couch surfers, such as when housing providers are determining housing needs.

Discussion: Couch surfing is informal; Airbnb is not couch surfing and not a shelter.

Nasra Mire: Certain cities have a cap – for example, Vancouver can house Airbnb for 30 days maximum. Airbnb would be under shelter probably.

Loren and **Nasra Mire** talk about the different types of housing and whether Airbnb is under shelter. Under the agreement with SOS-ISS, RC's stay at Airbnb is free of charge.

Nasra Mire: 16 year old RC's had to go through legal documents and the issue is how people raise their children is very different from structured parenting. (Discussion on how RC's fit into Airbnb model)

Alice: Do hostels fit under housing or another category?

Loren commented that would not be subsidized, but that would be transitional. He then confirmed the terms: hidden homeless, shelter, transitional, and permanent, with everyone.

Loren, Theresa, Cherie and Alice discussed the difference between continuum and spectrum, they conclude that spectrum means the same as continuum. We will use the term 'spectrum'

Outcomes from Feb 21st meeting with Ministry of Jobs, Trade & Technology (MJTT)

Yesterday, **James, Loren, Derek and Jenny** met with Vicki Chiu and Lily Grewal, as well as the MJTT policy team from Victoria via telephone, and they gave them a brief update of the project. Loren talked about the asset mapping and research, there was some initial feedback from folks on the call who were looking for recommendations and a proposal on how we can respond to RC's. Communicating with the government requires us to think about how we can align our two agendas. MJTT is looking for information and data prior to 31 March. In the meeting, James painted a broader vision of RC's here in the lower mainland.

James: We were trying to not jump too far ahead of the asset mapping research project. We now need to address how to coordinate all the data.

Jenny: The government really wanted us to identify the stakeholders. They're looking for concrete information.

Theresa: Did you get a sense that their urgency was due to a political driver or that they want to get this into their budget?

James commented that their urgency is due to a combination of things, he is not sure of what's driving it exactly but the Federal promise might be reflected in the budget.

Theresa then suggested Loren and James share about their presentation to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CIMM) in Ottawa.

James talked about their presentation and private meeting with the chair of the Committee—the chair was quite knowledgeable about policy ideas regarding RC's. They discussed about how there won't be many major policy changes as of now, they'll just try to not have major disruptions. James and Loren got Vancouver on the map in Ottawa.

Doug has prepared an edited version of James and Loren's presentation to the Standing Committee CIMM

Jenny: We hope to do some media training for service providers and RC's in order to respond to social media negativity.

Approve Alice's Report

Alice talked about the updates to her report. She made some changes due to **the closing of Inland Refugee Society (IRS)** and shortened that part a little. The main change in the executive summary is the IRS part. Another change made is on page 3, she made the recommendation clearer to what would actually be the repository.

- On page 4 in the background and context, she revised it to the number of refugee claimants served through SOS.
- On page 5 in the 2nd paragraph, MJTT is added into the Alliance to enhance MAP's capacity to do the work.
- On page 8, she softened the wording about the absence of IRS.

Doug: On page 10 in the middle, does the central agency include one central agency or more?

Alice: To me this reflects what I heard, but what do others think about this?

Theresa: There could be one organization that administers funding and another organization that is part of the hub. One hub for city of Vancouver and one for south of Fraser.

Loren: We shouldn't get too tied up in the predictive part of the report.

Alice: My listening is not totally neutral; it could be some of my interpretation. What I heard was that it was not predictive.

Alexandra appreciated Alice's efforts. She commented that the report fails to recognize the importance of other collaborations and connections, such as **MOSAIC** and that the report repeatedly mentions ISS. Thus, it is unfair to the Langley/Fraser Valley community in terms of representation.

Nasra Mire: What's considered a "case closed"? Since different agencies have different definitions of what considers a client served. Nasra Mire doesn't believe this is a fair opening statement.

Alice has spoken to James about Alexandra's concerns. Alice agrees with Alexandra about how ISS is the main organization in the central hub on page 3.

Alexandra: There should be a balance of references. Mentioning ISS several times drives this bias.

James: Maybe it's reflective of the interviews that Alice took and what she heard from respondents. How are we to formulate a report, should we collaborate with the information we have, or redo the report with new information provided now?

Theresa: The report could focus on the original question for Alice's research and focus more on the research question and outcomes, than the organizations.

Raul: said he doesn't feel his voice was heard, as there is no mention of Kinbrace in the report.

Peter: It seems like there is more focus on ISS. How do we work together to support refugee services and collaborate?

Alice talked further about the report, what's working well and what's not working well is the focus.

Alexandra: The power of collaboration is well done in this project. She can also provide statistics on the Fraser Valley's rise in support for RC's.

Alice: There's a lot of reference to MAP too in the report.

James: Is it the wish of the group to revise the report or move forward?

Alexandra: It's best to revise and look back at the research.

Alice: We're under budget in this report. There are 4 references to ISS so we could do something with this report, it was here at this point in time, and here's the follow-up. We could also mention other organizations other than ISS in the report.

Richard: What's the best way to correct the misinformation about Raven's Moon?

Loren: Just send an email to James or Alice.

Alexandra: It's not enough to just add more organizations; maybe we could remove organization names and just focus on the RC's?

Loren: Yes we will have something done by next meeting in March.

Alice and James and Loren said the deadline for people to submit changes they want to see included in the report is the evening of Wed, March 6th to James and Alice. The names of inasmuch, SOS and Options names should also be sent to Alice for her report revisions.

UPDATES:

Update - Housing Solutions - Barry and Doug

Doug talked about the definitions DenaKae Beno provided, including the working definition of community based action research. He talked about 'meanwhile spaces' too. Barry then met with Chris Friesen to discuss the Airbnb system. Barry asked whether MOSAIC worked with Airbnb.

Alexandra: No, MOSAIC does not.

Barry: We will talk with people in this table who have worked with this term and with housing providers, municipalities and agencies to find out whether they've gathered information about RC's who stay in Airbnb.

Any redevelopment properties on table and ideas you may have can be emailed to Barry.

Barry described diaspora: They are living outside of all the services we're providing. Part of the hidden homeless category, someone arrive in the caring culture in Guildford, for example, but they then disappear because they are taken care of by the community.

Jenny mentioned how when she was working with Red Cross, MOSAIC was her huge help when looking for connections with different groups. There's always an association that works with minority groups and MOSAIC provided a lot of these contacts.

Doug: The main questions we want to ask emergency shelters is what's happening to give us a focus in real time? Would we get funding and would we get proper support? Belkin House is a good source of support and what types of lessons can we learn from them?

Cherie can provide business information and contacts to Barry and Doug.

Alexandra: Can you please clarify on Stream B funding?

Doug: Housing means we need support for people in housing sector. There are single people going into housing, but who provides the funding for supporting the individuals in housing and in what ways? Would it be through expansion, or adding an additional role, or applying for stream B funding?

Update - Information Working Group

Richard announced that the MAP Website went live today and announced that MAP's event, "Starting Over" at UFV is happening on March 19; all are encouraged to come out.

Jenny thanked Richard for putting in lots of effort into the website. Go to mapbc.org in order to check if your agency information is correct.

OTHER ITEMS:

Housing Working Group co-chair – during Loren's sabbatical? (new co-chair)

Loren: I'm going on a sabbatical at the end of March for several months.

James: We're looking for a new co-chair. Maybe Derek can step in to finish this term (end of June).

Derek is looking forward to taking on this role; he closely follows Loren's work and would be open to stepping in to co-chair.

Peter: It's also a good idea to have a co-chair outside of the HWG for the future.

It's been decided that **Derek from Kinbrace** will be the new co-chair for the rest of the term.

Propose: Strategy Forum: Towards a Housing Solution for RC's in BC: 29 April Monday 10am – 4pm:

Loren: We are planning to host a strategy forum to propose housing solutions for RC's. How do we draw people in to this? Any recommendations? We need people who know refugee communities. April 29th is the proposed date. Is there energy for this?

Cherie can ask for space at the UFV for this forum.

Loren: This Strategy Forum will take place at the end of April due to there being a MAP meeting on April 25th, Jenny's schedule, Easter coming up and aiming to get report done by April, so we don't want to bundle everything together.

Alexandra: Fraser Valley Map would be keen to support an event like this. MOSAIC could also be a venue for that event if it is hosted in Vancouver.

They then discussed about when the event could happen, **maybe May would be a better time.**

Jenny: visited the **Dixon Transition Society** with **Vanessa (Journey Home)** in Burnaby; a society that provides transitional housing to women in danger. Maybe Dixon could accept RC's, they are happy to provide 30 day emergency housing. Their mandate is they only accept women who need safety from threats here in Vancouver. She suggests that BC211 can do phone calls to help these women.

Nathan: BC211 does work by phone to support Refugee Claimants, our workers are trained to talk with claimants who face violence.

Meeting Adjourned: 3:30 pm

Next Meeting: 28 March 2019, Canadian Red Cross, 3400 Lake City Way, Burnaby