

MAP Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 28, 2019 9:30AM - 12:30PM

Location: MOSAIC, 5575 Boundary Road, Vancouver

The meeting was held on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples including the Tsleil-Waututh, Squamish and Musqueam nations.

Attendees: Claudia Buenda(MSDPR), Jenny Moss (MAP), Mélodie Honen-Delmar (MAP), Saleem Spindari (MOSAIC), Mariana Martinez Vieyra (VAST); Mia Morin (Vancity), Peter Prediger (inasmuch); Tammy Johnson (inasmuch); Richard Belcham (inasmuch), Nathan Wright (BC2II), Laura Mannix (DIVERSEcity) ; Kiana Reyes (MOSAIC); Ana Maria Bustamente (BIPT); Mary Kam(SUCCESS) ; Valentina Stanciu (MSDPR); Iris Solorzano (Options); Loren Balisky (Kinbrace); Derek Chu (Kinbrace); Katherine Griffin (MOSAIC) ; James Grunau (Journey home) ; Sabrina Dumitra (AMSSA); Sireen El-Nashar (Zaytuna); Fran Gallo (Kinbrace); Frank Cohn (VAST), Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC); Louise Ghoussouv (BC2II); Paige Slight (MAP); Luisa Brett (Covenant House); Sara Lopez (VAST); Hamed Taheri (Pomegrante Consulting); Christina Failho (Freedom for immigrants); Christina Mansfield (Freedom for immigrants); James Grunau (Journey Home Community); Vanessa Roth (Journey Home Community); Njeri Kontulathi (Vancity); Sophia Abraham (IRCC); Jameline Bitun (IRCC); Laura Moran Bowa (Fraser Health); Cecilia Tagle (Vancouver School Board SWIS); Teresa Fuller (MCC/FUSMC); Valentina Stanciu (MSDPR); Iris Solorzano (Options); Sandra Almeida (SUCCESS); Baldwin Wong (City of Vancouver); Adam Perzow (CBSA); Melvi Jouzy (Roots Community Health Center); Jwan Aziz (MOSAIC); Raul Gatica (Kinbrace) David Griffiths (Legal Services Society).

Guests : Christina Failho, Christina Mansfield: Freedom for Immigrants, USA

By phone:

Azadeh Tamjeedi (UNHCR); Nisrin (Refugee legal aid /CCR); Vicky Chiu (MJTT)

Apologies received from IRB

Welcome from Co-Chair: Mariana Martinez Vieyra, VAST

Mariana (VAST): Thanks were expressed to Vancity and the Provincial Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology (MJTT) for the funding that supports MAP. Mariana welcomed everyone and initiated the introduction rounds. Mariana also paid tribute to Christine Thomas (VAST) and her crucial role in MAP and VAST and as a role model to Mariana.

Mariana reminded that there will be a MOSAIC 'I belong' light lunch offered after the MAP meeting to launch their program.

- Mariana outlined the Agenda and apologies for the meeting running longer in order to accommodate the election and speakers. The Agenda was approved.

- The January 24th MAP Minutes were approved.

1. Election of new MAP co-chair.

Jenny (MAP):

- There are two nominations for the co chair position.
- Jenny invited the nominees to make their statements.
- Every agency gets one vote so multiple agency members need to consult each other for a decision. Your agency needs to be in good standing with MAP in order to vote.
- The attendees on the phone to text their vote to Saleem privately.
- The two nominees are Sabrina Dumitra and Richard Belcham

Sabrina (AMSSA): works at AMSSA – an umbrella organization for immigrants, and she started 6 years ago in the immigrant and refugee sector. AMSSA joined MAP as AMSSA wanted to contribute to MAP community and she felt strong about bringing knowledge from a different stake holder. Her personal career has taken her to support refugee claimants first in Europe (Northern Ireland); and outside work with AMSSA, she volunteered as part of leadership team with Red Cross First Contact program and now volunteers with the Immigration Refugee Board assisting during hearings. She welcomes the opportunity to serve MAP and sent good luck to Richard Belcham as well. (applause)

Jenny (MAP): any questions for Sabrina?

Claudia (MSDPR): what is your position at AMSSA exactly?

Sabrina (AMSSA): Coordinator of Programs and Communications.

Richard (inasmuch): He has been involved for 3 years at Inasmuch and since August, he is a full-time settlement worker. This has allowed him to understand issues in a personal way because of the hands-on nature of his work. At MAP, he is the co-chair of the Information Working Group and he has been leading the planning of the MAP event *Starting Over* and the new website, therefore he has a good understanding of how MAP works. He spent 30 years in communication and management as an employee manager in HR, supervising 75 people. After that he started to work for inasmuch. He is a fan of getting things done. He believes that MAP is full of amazing people and is pioneering the sector. If you choose him as co-chair, he will do everything he can for MAP members and claimants.

Jenny (MAP): any questions for Richard?

Claudia (MSDPR): how many years have you been working? 30 or 13? Because he appears quite young for 30.

Richard: 30 years, I moisturize. (laughter)

- Voting slips had been handed out ahead of the meeting, so members voted, and a count was made. Results: - Richard won the vote and was duly elected as co-chair.

Mariana (VAST): wants to thank Saleem, because he is not replaceable, but also Sabrina, for running.

2. Presentation: City of Vancouver Social Planning Department: Access without Fear policy

Mariana (VAST): introduced Baldwin Wong (City of Vancouver Social Planner): Baldwin leads the immigration partnership and is the co-leader of Chinatown transformation group.

The Presentation is attached to these Minutes as a PowerPoint

Questions:

Laura (DIVERSEcity): asked if there is potential for collaboration to demonstrate this promising policy to other cities in the Lower Mainland?

Baldwin (City of Vancouver): Other cities are very aware of this policy, not only about operations. In Vancouver there is a new city council in place, so it's necessary to see how they will advance the policy.

Mary Kam (Success): Which people could benefit from these workshops?

Baldwin (City of Vancouver): For now, directed to the organization sector and beyond, but they are trying to expand.

Mia Morin (Vancity): thanks for the valuable presentation. Regarding privacy of information, the "required by law" caveat is to what purpose?

Baldwin (City of Vancouver): as far as we know none of the city services require personal information, the police, park board and library are not part of it. "By law" terminology was suggested by the legal department to use with the police. Now, it is only adopted as a guideline to aid with on going communication needs with CBSA.

Mia Morin (Vancity): And so it works as a disclaimer?

Baldwin (City of Vancouver): yes

Claudia (MSDPR): What happens if there is domestic violence and there is a need to report it, does the reporter also need to ask about immigration status? And a comment: once she had a homeless client and they had no resources for him because he did not have a legal status, but then they looked into it and found out that he could have accessed services. Therefore, we need more information and communication to avoid such cases.

Baldwin (City of Vancouver): About the case of domestic violence: within the city's own jurisdiction they do not need to reveal immigration status. This policy is applicable to three kinds of groups: victim, witness and complainants and therefore, they don't have to disclose their immigration status and should feel safe to do so.

Raul (Kinbrace): Emphasized that the guidelines and details are important for the city council, and that the government tries to promote asylum seekers' needs in the city. But when we consider asylum seekers in terms of numbers, there are not so many (2000+) compared to Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) of whom 40% are women; and we need to emphasise their needs more. **Options** recently secured funding to work with TFW women. 2 social planners went to visit the women with a survey and promised they would return, but nobody got back to them. Therefore, he wanted to follow up regarding the needs of TFW.

Baldwin (City of Vancouver): he will follow up.

Question: How about other immigrant groups or undocumented people?

Baldwin (City of Vancouver): the policy is asylum seekers' focused, but covers everyone whether it is TFW or asylum seekers or immigrants, they are all treated in the same way.

Fran (Kinbrace): Is the RCMP on the same page? And, for a Real Estate Tax or development, do we need to disclose immigration status?

Baldwin (City of Vancouver): Any legal transactions demand that a person's residency status needs to be disclosed, but any service provision does not need this disclosure (the services are listed in the Policy e.g. Fire rescue). They reached out to CBSA but did not get a response.

Richard (inasmuch): is the policy available to download online?

Baldwin (City of Vancouver): yes (at <https://council.vancouver.ca/20160406/documents/pspc3.pdf>) and Jenny will circulate the PowerPoint with the Minutes.

Mariana: thank you to Baldwin Wong for the presentation

10:45 AM *Break*

3. Quantitative and qualitative update on Refugee Claimants in the Lower Mainland

Presenter: Nasra on behalf of Bahar Taheri, BC Refugee Hub

Nasra: BC Refugee Hub wants to thank everyone who attended the webinars and trainings. There will be speakers from MOSAIC on March 5th on mental health care for refugee claimants, and webinar is also already for registration into April. They were full in March. March 12th training is re: LGBTQ. Feel free to contact Bahar with your questions.

4. Presentation: CBSA: Update on the Pacific Region Immigration Holding Centre

Mariana made the introduction: Adam Perzow is a Regional Program Manager with CBSA in the Enforcement and Intelligence Division. He has been working in Detentions for 2.5 years with a specific focus on the new IHC and related service contracts. He has been a Manager with CBSA since 2011 and has managed various portfolios within the Inland Enforcement program.

Adam (CBSA): said that it was his first MAP meeting. He works in the detention area and on different portfolios. He likes to work on the detention program as he is seeing changes. He will give updates on Pacific Region Immigration Holding Centre and the Immigration framework completion timeline.

In 2016, the minister of police and safety allocated \$38 million to change the infrastructure of detention and invest in various alternatives to detention. This consists in using different tools, increasing mental health support, and changing some of the policy regarding detention.

They aim to close the airport detention center and are building a new centre in Surrey as they are also doing in Toronto. The Immigration Holding centre (IHC) opening has been delayed by construction issues, but now it is expected to open in June 2019. This will lead to the closure of immigration holding centre at the airport.

IHC constructed at 13130 – 76 Avenue, Surrey, BC. It is close to transit and to key NGO's and they look forward to working with them. In 2015-2016, they designed the facility grounded on the following principles:

- It will not be a correctional facility but will focus more on individuals not having the right immigration status.

- The architecture will reflect that: detention is always seen as a last resort solution to people who may not have legal status.
- They understand that detention can have a big impact, so they try to avoid negative outcomes: It is a college-dormitory type of facility with 70 beds,
- CBSA are not looking at detaining more people although it can hold double the number of regular detainees. But its been built to scale up in case of increase of asylum seekers.
- There are 40 male beds, 30 female beds and 14 of them are family beds.
- There is a visiting area so they can meet with legal counsel, families, NGOs.
- There are also indoor and outdoor recreational spaces (drastic change from YVR basement).
- There is also a videoconference-equipped room
- Medical services on sites (nurse, psychologist, doctors with immediate access).
- There is also CBSA reporting and checking areas, as well as rooms dedicated for legal aid,
- For children there is schooling, and an arts and craft area for children.
- There are 2 to 3 beds in each room with an open concept - no cells and rooms can't be locked.
- There are common areas with television and games.
- As well as the guards there will be CBSA staff working, so that detainees can have access to staff.
- In the facilities that CBSA uses today for families, usually fathers are separated from their child as there is no room for families. But in this design, the family can stay together although there are usually fewer of them. They have their own recreational space for family.
- Clients also have a sports area in the recreational space, for instance a gym area.
- There is also a worship room and detainees can request religious services and CBSA will provide it.
- There is a space for NGO legal aid rooms (interview rooms)
- Medical help including an isolation room like 'hospital room' if needed.
- From now, CBSA will facilitate procedures and contracts (they used to rely on BC to manage these but now its changed). They already have the food contracts in place (as well as cleaning, health...).
- There will be an opportunity for stakeholder and NGO's to have a tour and meet and greet so they can familiarize themselves about the facility. It is in the forefront of our mind to show but for now, it is just not ready yet.

Any questions?

Fran (Ready Tour): is there room for RPTD hearing in the interview room?

Adam (CBSA): there is an intention to provide for division hearings, but IRB has asked that full hearings can be on site too, so CBSA needs to work with IRB to reach an agreement.

Sara Lopez (VAST): Detention will be longer?

Adam (CBSA): When we detain someone, our goal is always to be the shortest duration, but it goes case by case. But our design principles are to be short in duration.

Richard (inasmuch): He is excited to hear that this is closer to the Fraser Valley and would like to visit when possible.

Adam (CBSA): Not too long after the building opens it will be possible.

Alexandra (MOSAIC): as a co-chair of MAP Fraser Valley, she invited Adam to present at a FV MAP meeting.

Regarding the eligibility interview, could this be the location instead of on Pender Street?

Adam (CBSA): He can discuss it with the management team but there is a priority to meet needs of

clients now.

Mariana (VAST): asked about the possibility of having counsellors onsite? Perhaps instead of psychologist or psychiatric? She would like to remind and encourage CBSA to look into that. And she likes the idea of engaging with NGO's to oversee and improve the detention centre. It was good to hear this news. Will mental health training for staff be available at the center?

Adam (CBSA): CBSA is open to all types of training and is looking forward to working with NGOs for training around mental health. There is an ongoing focus on mental health of detainees through the Canadian Association of Mental Health training focused on detainees which has been developed nationally. At Headquarters, they want to develop mental health guideline and are looking at a whole realm of options. NGOS with counselling services are more than happy to work on site, and there is space for counsellors too.

Christiana Failho (Freedom for Immigrants): she comes from the USA and works with detainees. She would like to know more about what visits would look like.

Adam (CBSA): The Visiting hours are twice a day. We can still initiate a non-contact visit but there is also open visit, but they are still concerned about safety.

Celia (VSB SWIS): who will be detained at the facility? Families? For how long?

Adam (CBSA): said that he encountered a lot of different people who are inadmissible and violate the immigration refugee act. The facility is not meant for dangerous people but there is a different space for those with a different background. As far as families are concerned, we try hard to find solutions for families and especially for the needs of children, and try to find alternatives. Usually when they end up in custody, there is a serious identity concern, or a serious risk of not reporting for removal from Canada. Detention is the last resort, and it always depends on where they are in the process.

Vicky Chiu (MJTT): She is looking forward to seeing the work of CBSA with NGOS. Which NGO are contracted to work for medical services?

Adam (CBSA): CBSA are evaluating medical contracts that have been submitted and are determining who will win it. They are usually private. In Toronto, it is Calien health service. Which NGO will work at the facility? They are open to any NGO that wants to work with CBSA to deliver valuable services.

Laura (DIVERSEcity) is there funding for that?

Adam (CBSA): No.

Melvi (Roots Community Health Center) Would there be other method of detention? Either downtown at the Salvation Army, or at a women's shelter?

Adam (CBSA): there was discussion about an open concept, but he is unsure if this is moving forward. For now, it is at least not in detention, but it is an open concept.

Mariana (VAST): no time for more questions, but members can channel questions via Jenny to CBSA afterwards. And there will be another CBSA presentation next month about Alternatives to Detention.

5. Funding update: Legal Services Society: Legal Aid Budget 2019

David Griffiths, Legal Services Society

David (LSS): He is Manager of resources for criminal law and appeals that the legal service society provides. He stressed the position where we are with funding: there is considerable uncertainty about funding with a potential withdrawal of service by the lawyers.

There was a growth in claimant numbers and needs, but for the last 6-months the numbers have been plateauing. There is also a shift in source country and a change in volume. Last month was the highest volume and it is difficult to say how many there will be as the number is very volatile.

LSS is optimistic about receiving more funding, but it will be harder to get the same amount. They rely on \$1.7 m to cover refugee services, but everyone agrees it has not been adequate because of the volume. There is a gap that must be filled. Ottawa's legal plan takes into account this difficulty and plans to make a decision before summer.

LSS will try to provide services as long as they can within the available funding, but there is no committed funding until end of year, and there may be disruptions if we don't get it. The province said that they couldn't rely on the same findings because Ontario and Quebec have increasing numbers of refugee claimants. LSS needs at least \$1 million to make it to the end of the fiscal year, and they are doing what they can to avoid disruption to our clients and hopefully they will eventually get there.

Funding for legal aid is a long-standing chronic issue and is under stress for decades. The value of services gets lost when government creates the budget. They rely on lawyers with private companies at a rate which Legal Services can't afford, and so the budget is always inadequate. What kind of plan can be created to stay effectively engaged. Their other priorities are: safety and security in family law, protection order priority, and child protection concern and duty council are a high priority. Thus, this is a significant time and they need help as they cope with these emerging issues.

Jenny (MAP): The Refugee Lawyer Group has asked to address MAP in March about possible action.

Mariana (VAST): If anyone has further questions please stay in touch through Jenny.

5. MAP Information Working Group Report - NEW MAP website and opportunity for comments

Presenter: Co-chair Richard Belcham

Richard (Inasmuch): Presentation of website: www.mapbc.org. Introduced Patrick (MOSAIC) as the designer of the website. The website will go live during the next week. Fran has helped check our facts from a legal point of view.

These are the key tabs: housing, success stories and getting facts about refugee claimants and "meet a MAP member" tab. Vancity and MJTT funding highlighted at the bottom of the page.

"About MAP" tab introduces mission of who we are what we do, the MAP co chairs and the link to MAP Fraser valley. The MAP agencies are divided by partners and participants and it can expand. If there is any

changes or errors, please send a message via Jenny; and check if your membership is in good standing otherwise you may not be here!

There is also an *event page*, and our Starting Over event on March 19th is listed. It will be a Ted talk-style at the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford.

There is also a *contact page* and a link to our Facebook page.

The next tab is the “*Did you know?*” section. This features a description of who is a refugee claimant, as well as the different types of refugees with new documents from UNHCR and search information about refugee categories. Thanks to BC Refugee Hub, there is a *FAQs* tab.

There are also reports and action plan and impact tabs, explaining the collaboration MAP has achieved together (e.g. World Refugee Day celebrations.) There are success stories: to dispel some of those myths and if you know people, who have success stories, please share them with us for the website.

The *Resources* tab: is for refugee claimants and shows the links that needs to be known about services and agencies across lower mainland. For the *Communities* tab; please check if the details are right. If you would like to join MAP, there is a link to signing up.

The new *Members area* is password protected and gives access to a news page, meeting schedule, agendas and minutes and member directory. There also will be a discussion forum once it’s gone live.

Comments:

Saleem (MOSAIC): contrast with the old website is important.

Mariana (VAST): gave IWG much credit and for a good job

Patrick (MOSAIC): The website can go live possibly this evening if everything is good.

6. Agency Updates

Mariana (VAST): MOSAIC lunch will happen after the MAP meeting

Katherine (MOSAIC): conversation circle for refugee claimants until March 12 and then it will be back in April on a different evening

Alexandra (MOSAIC): partnering with OPTIONS to offer an employment ready workshop: 2h:30 length workshops, giving networking prep for work interview (contact Joanne or Katherine) takes place on Friday 15th There will be free food service training with Spanish language services available.

Matthias (VAST): trans newcomers hub lounge (I belong)

Sara Lopez (VAST): opened the Surrey office with ISS of BC, and glad to have new additional 3 days a week for counselling.

Fran (Kinbrace): April 3rd there will be an available Ready tour, but they are full for March and now only taking registrations for April 12 (register online). Fran encourages everyone to sign up early in the claim process- if it is too close to the hearing there is not enough time to make use of all the services.

Mélotie (MAP): I am also a Research Assistant and we are currently looking for representatives from organizations in Metro Vancouver to discuss opportunities for the social participation of immigrants and refugees in community spaces throughout Metro Vancouver. The goal of our study is to determine community-based outcomes for successful integration of immigrants and refugees, with an added focus on French-speaking migrants settling within Metro Vancouver's Francophone minority community. I also have invitation forms that I could give if some of the representatives are interested in participating.

Jenny (MAP): MAP 19th March event at Abbotsford, I have posters and feel free to put them up and be one of the lucky 150 to attend!

Sireen (Zaytuna): Wellness fair and everyone is welcomed (Sofra Palestinian refugee) (shared via MAP email)

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

Mariana will not be present, but Richard will.

MAP gratefully acknowledges the funding provided by Vancity and the BC Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology without which our work would not be possible