



MAP Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 27, 2019 9:30AM - 12:00PM

Hosted by OPTIONS at City Centre Library Room 418, 10350 University Dr, Surrey

The meeting was held on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, specifically the Kwantlen, Katzie, Semiahmoo, and Tsawwassen First Nations

Attendees: Mariana Martinez Vieyra (VAST); Claudia Buendia (MSDPR), Jenny Moss (MAP), Mélodie Honen-Delmar (MAP); Tammy Johnson (inasmuch); Richard Belcham (inasmuch), Derek Chu (Kinbrace); Sireen El-Nashar (Zaytuna); Fran Gallo (Kinbrace); James Grunau (Journey Home Community); Vanessa Roth (Journey Home Community); Julia Wu (bc2II); Mia Morin (Vancity); Bayron Figueroa (Purpose); Fiona Stevenson (DIVERSEcity);); Tomas Reyes (Surrey/North Delta Division of Family Practice and Roots Community Health Center; Sabrina Dumitra (AMSSA); Valentina Stanciu (MSDPR); Iris Solorzano (OPTIONS); Ana Maria Bustamente (BIPT); Mini Kahlon (SDPR); Jenny Lam (OPTIONS); Rocio (OPTIONS); Saleem Spindari (MOSAIC); Barny Grove (MAP); Jean Parlina (Peace Geeks); Lama Shekh (Surrey Libraries); Patricia Castillo (OPTIONS); Rampreet (OPTIONS); Duncan Bernardo (BC Newcomer camp); Meaad Alharbi (SOS)
Co-Chair: **Mariana Martinez Vieyra, VAST**

Apologies: Sabine Lehr (ICA Victoria), Immigration Refugee Board, Gulalai Habib (Kiwassa), Masha Rademaker (NSMS)

- Mariana acknowledged the indigenous territory where we met, and thanks were expressed to Vancity for the funding that supports MAP.
- **Welcome and Introductions. Outline of Agenda** and change in Refugee Hub planning, as they will not be joining the meeting; approved.
- Review of **May Minutes**, approved
- **Announcements:**
 - Farewell and thanks to **Saleem Spindari, co chair**. He was thanked for his hard work for MAP and his mentorship, his ethics, kindness and sense of humour. Saleem Spindari shared how he became engaged in MAP and thanked people who have mentored him (Brad, Loren, James, etc.) Saleem Spindari emphasized that MAP has shown the value and power of us working as a collective for refugee claimants and shared his gratitude for the support of Vancity and to be able to bring Jenny onboard. Saleem shared his conviction that Richard and Mariana will do a great job in the future for MAP.
 - Farewell and special thanks to Mélodie Honen-Delmar (MAP) it's her last meeting.
 - Report and thank you to all volunteers and participants at **World Refugee Day**. The feedback session for World Refugee Day will be from 12 to 12:45. Jenny presented the events via photos kindly taken by Sadiq. Thanks were expressed to all the agencies who participated in Word Refugee Day. Some people were making connections right in the room, finding support that they needed. This made the event very successful. Thank you to everyone involved

- **Introducing Peacegeeks and Arrival Advisor**
Presenter: Jean Parlina, Project Coordinator - Community Engagement & Outreach
(The presentation is attached in PDF)

Questions:

Q: Why is it that Arrival Advisor is in English, French, and options for Arabic and Chinese, Korean, Tagalog and Punjabi version will be coming soon? Why not Spanish or Farsi?

(PeaceGeek): We rely on the BC Newcomer Guide 2017 for the app. So for the new one coming, we will work with what languages we have in the guide.

Q: The part which is translated is only the guide?

(PeaceGeek): Only the BC Newcomers Guide is translated. BC211 information is not translated – and when users go to the website it's in English.

Q: The website will still be in English?

(PeaceGeek): Yes

Q: Traditionally claimants upon arrival contact BC211. The idea is for transition to arrival advisor for information AFTER first arrival help from BC211?

(BC211): My understanding is that A.A. is another optional tool for people to use. People can still call us anytime for information. It's just to access it easier.

Q: The main challenge to access information for refugee and refugee claimants is the language. The information is there but some claimants cannot access it. Language is very important.

(PeaceGeek): Thank you - We need this feedback now so we can tell our funders that this is important.

Q: Who decided about the languages?

(PeaceGeek): It was based on the languages available in the BC Newcomers' Guide when the project started in 2017.

Comment: The newcomers guide, like many other resources, is focused on newcomers as a whole. There is a need to have clarity for what refugee claimants can access. If I look and see it is only for IRCC-funded newcomers, it creates frustration. So we need clarity in what services claimants can access. BC 211 is aware, but the Guide is only for newcomers

(PeaceGeek): We hear you about the importance of eligibility information. Some service descriptions in BC211 includes eligibility information, some don't (not required by BC211). There might be opportunities in the future to work with BC211 and SPOs to make sure that eligibility data is captured in specific fields (instead of part of text description) so they can be easily searched.

(BC211): I know for us the resources department tries to pay attention to the language we are using in our description whether it is for sponsored refugees or refugee claimants, and please update us when things change and call us back.

(PeaceGeek): For instance, the Surrey library says it is a general library for newcomers, but we don't know if it is also for claimants, so it is important to let us know who you are serving.

Comment: You need to check for eligibility criteria and temporary workers.

One recommendation is that the information for refugee claimants and refugees are not on the

same page. If you are looking from a refugee claimant perspective, it is really confusing because it's a different service. Also, the question how long is somebody in Canada is number 2 but what is your status in Canada is number 6. Why not number 2? Then, it is less confusing because questions are less broad.

(PeaceGeek): We cannot edit the content of the BC Newcomers' Guide due to copyright. Thank you for the feedback for the question numbers.

Q: Have you linked the app for people who are still outside Canada, before they travel to Canada?

(PeaceGeek): The Service Advisor app that is map-based is only for the refugee camps; but A.A. includes information only relevant to BC. You can get to the A.A. app from all over the world but its information is searchable only up to 25 km radius from the geo location of your mobile device, so the service listings are not available outside Canada.

Mariana thanked Jean and Peacegeeks

BREAK

- BC Refugee Hub were unfortunately not available for an update

- **Presentation by Duncan Bernardo (BC Newcomer camp)**

There is a Newcomer camp starting in July and August for 8 weeks next week. Provide English classes in the morning and sports in the afternoon. We need client referrals to fill all the spaces. We try to get children to enrol for 8 weeks. It is for 6 – 12 years. But we are flexible on age. For volunteering, we are focusing now on training staff but as we progress, we will ask for volunteers, especially for the sport components. There are still some spots. In Surrey we have a few spots, and in Vancouver we have 10, so we need more. Bus passes are provided. We give priority to children with 1 year or less time in Canada, but if there is still a struggle with English, they are accepted. Flyers will be sent out.

MAP Housing Working Group (HWG) update

- **James Grunau (Journey Home Community):** HWG has been active, especially on the Meanwhile Spaces project, and we have written documents (copy provided) and members can refer to that for further information and model agreements.

Meanwhile Spaces

- **Barry Growe (MAP) :** The idea of Meanwhile Spaces is that they are large or small empty buildings that could be used. There are agencies who are making use of these spaces (e.g. City of Vancouver, inasmuch). They are emptied out and waiting to be developed; for example, in Vancouver there is a hotel that will be developed in perhaps 4-5 years, and now has 95 occupants. We are in the beginning stages of talking to developers and municipalities to see if they are interested. Municipalities control licensing and own buildings. They need to make it easy to say yes, you can have this building, and that it's not going to take 5 years. France and Britain are on that road too. In Paris, there is a hospital that was given up and turned into housing for newly arrived refugee claimants and homeless people. It also has a space like Granville Island and became a destination in Paris. It could be a single house to a large building. It's always a temporary spot. We look at the place for a minimum of 1 year. None of us have the resources to build something new, but we can take advantage of unused properties. If we present interest to developers to create Meanwhile Spaces, then we would notify the member agencies of MAP who need housing. There would be decision as to which agencies would be approached. There is an information sheet that could be use as an agreement tool. We are careful not trying to push in front of homeless people, and these buildings can provide for both populations,

otherwise it can generate hostility. We have done a fair amount of research on it and we know the mechanics of it. We hope that this can be a resource for MAP agencies who are interested in developing Meanwhile Spaces.

Q: So, would it mix refugee claimants and local homeless?

Barry Growe (MAP): When we introduce the idea, we are not trying to push people aside but considerably increase housing. We realize that some of the spaces municipalities may choose to use for the homeless rather than refugee claimant, but we would like to see these spaces consider both.

Q: Can you clarify the role of MAP agencies? Who is the “we”?

Barry Growe (MAP) : We are going on behalf of MAP, but MAP does not do housing. MAP is not a service provider.

James Grunau (Journey Home Community): The tool is for MAP member agencies, but MAP doesn't need to get involved in approvals. It's only a resource for agencies.

Election of MAP HWG co-chairs

- **Derek Chu (Kinbrace):** The co-chairs are ending their first-year terms and the committee will be electing new ones. The HWG has recommended the existing chairs continue for another year. But others can nominate themselves, or others. Requirements: must be a partner of MAP and HWG member.

Toward a Solution for Refugee Claimant Housing report

The report was sent to the province (MJTT) March 31st. For the public report, we need to remove some part but some of the agencies felt that the parts that the Ministry wanted to remove were too important, so HWG sent in a counter-proposal - awaiting a response.

- **James Grunau (Journey Home Community):** It was announced that \$6 million was given to provincial government for short term housing for refugee claimants in BC. We are waiting to see if there is going to be announcement on how it is going to be disposed. The HWG is thinking of how to respond. It depends on the details of the announcement how to formulate the response. If interested, you can join the HWG to share your thoughts.
- **Saleem Spindari (MOSAIC):** The government sent an email to Stream B services and MAP executive. The funding would be used in consultation with those groups, and MAP was mentioned too. They will also use the report to guide the funding. This is hopeful and exciting. As a collective we are being recognized. MAP can be there and acknowledging and making recommendations. Members should at no time feel left out, so reach out to MAP executive.

Agency Updates

- **Bayron Figueroa (Purpose):** Event for Father's Day in Langley with Purpose and Dignidad, there was also training for overdose treatment and HIV provided. 260 people came.
We have a new program called 'Now What', coordinated with VAST every 2nd and 3rd Monday of the month. Let us know which language we need to provide. The concept is to work with claimants to improve their employment skills and resumes and help them together in a supportive way. The first session is on Monday, 8th July.
- **Mariana Martinez Vieyra (VAST):** 'Getting through it' is focused on claimants. but 'now what' includes claimants who are also in the post-arrival period.
- **Fran Gallo (Ready Tour) :** The refugee claimant guide has been updated but we are waiting for all the translated languages. Please don't use the old guides, you can download and print from the website. We will have the printing done shortly.

For Ready Tours you don't need to wait until claimants have their hearing. Right after their eligibility interview is best, they can come to learn about evidence and learn about the board (IRB) early. Sometimes it is hard for lawyers to get their clients onto a tour before the hearing. Please encourage the tour, and thanks to everyone for another year of Ready Tours.

- **James Grunau (Journey Home Community):** Refugee Highways was presented. It is a refugee round table held in Portland (posters left)
- **Richard Belcham (Inasmuch):** two events for World Refugee Day. One with the chamber of commerce event and in the evening a Vancouver documentary film called 'Inside my heart'. 160 attendees. We will launch 'Ride for Refugees' sponsored bike ride in October and raise money for a new van.
- **Tammy Johnson (inasmuch):** Launched "Welcome Homes" a program to bring homes and expertise together. Targeting community volunteers to help provide accommodation for refugee claimants and assistance in getting to know their community, and inasmuch will provide settlement services. The idea is a collaboration to build family and housing.
- **Julia Wu (BC211):** We are still in search for new ED, let us know about your new program so we can add it.
- **Meaad Alharbi (SOS) :** We have a new housing worker, we will stay in touch for Vancouver and Surrey.
- **Sireen El-Nashar (Zaytuna):** Zaytuna has an upcoming training; and a festival coming with over 40 countries represented.
- **Jenny Moss (MAP):** Last meeting for the summer and we are looking for new speakers suggestions or topics for the fall months.
The funding for MAP is a little bit down. Jenny will send out an email to all of you to ask for the 2 things that she does you couldn't without, and the 1 thing that you want Jenny to stop; and also if agency news could be limited to a bulletin once a week to reduce MAP emails.
- **Saleem Spindari (MOSAIC):** We have an award of \$5,000 for female refugee leadership planning in whatever sector. The money could be used for training or education. July 8th is the deadline, the information is available on MOSAIC's website.
- **Q: Fran Gallo (Kinbrace):** If a candidate just wants to study nursing, but does not want to be in a leadership position, does it still apply?
- **Saleem Spindari (MOSAIC):** if you don't try, you don't get it. If nursing creates leadership in her community, then yes. It depends on how you frame it.
- **Iris Solorzano (OPTIONS):** We have Jenny Lam at Options now as the Senior Manager. Any employment related issues, Patricia can help. We are running a summer camp for youth for employment skills and volunteering skills.
- **Mia Morin (Vancity):** On WRD, we had a media release announcing that Vancity will sponsor one refugee family every year. It is in partnership with ISS. Along with the financial aid we will be enrolling 10 staff in the program. We are launching a corporate challenge to fund 50 families in total by other corporations.

- **Tomas Reyes (Surrey/North-Delta Division of Family Practice and Roots Community Health Center):** Ongoing challenge for refugee claimants to access healthcare, Roots is trying to provide culturally tailored primary care for claimants, tailored to the needs of each individual. If you have clients in Surrey and North Delta, please refer them to Roots. We are located in the Guildford area and at this point, we are working 2 days a week but actively looking to expand our hours of operation.
- **Mariana Martinez Vieyra (VAST):** VAST is launching a group in August on Thursdays for Latin American families to support them and have healing time in communities.

12:00 PM Feedback forms and adjournment Adjourn for the summer!

Next Meeting: Thursday 26 September at 9:30 am at ISSofBC

MAP gratefully acknowledges the funding provided by Vancity without whom our work would not be possible