



## MAP Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 24, 2020 - 9:30AM – 11:45 AM

**Attendees:** Jenny Lam (Options), Richard Belcham (inasmuch), Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC), Salih Arif (MOSAIC), Marzieh Nezakat (MOSAIC), Parissa Roofigari (MOSAIC), Tammy Johnson (inasmuch), Michelle Murray-Schlitt (inasmuch), Mia Morin (Vancity), Sarah Lopez (VAST), Mariana Martinez Vieyra (VAST), Jhevoi Melville (VAST), Rawan Moon (VAST), Valentina Stanciu (MSDPR), Paige Wang (MSDPR), Azadeh Tamjeedi (UNHCR), Kathleen Cashin (Covenant House), Lupita Chebib (CNH), Bridget Bell (IRB-RPD), Sophia Underhill (Ready Tour), Derek Chu (Kinbrace), Ryan Reid (Kinbrace), Moe Zaqout (Kinbrace) Loren Balisky (Kinbrace), Sabrina Dumitra (AMSSA), Koyali Burman (SVNH), Wazhma Wakil (Umbrella MH Co-op) Brad Kinnie (JHC), Vanessa Roth (JHC), Yulia Khamzina (JHC), Boots Meier (QMUNITY), Julia Wu (bc2II); Raminder Kang (PICS), Devinder Chattha (PICS), Laura Mannix (DIVERSEcity), Iris Solorzano (Options), Muna Amir (SOS), Katya Quintanilla (SOS), Carolina Villa (SOS), Sadiq Mohibi (SOS), Bahar Taheri (BC Refugee Hub), Yasmin Martinez (College Educacentre), Angela Kim (SUCCESS), Suddhodan Baidya (SUCCESS), Ali Mustafa (Independent), Masa Kateb (JumpStart Refugee Talent), Masha Rademakers (NSMS), Richard Soo (East Catholic Church), Sireen El-Nashar (Zaytuna), Amos Kambere, Jamie Kopp (UMOJA), May Shihadeh (Royal Roads Uni), Jenny Moss (MAP)

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**Welcome from Co-Chair:** Jenny Lam to her first MAP meeting as chair!

**Jenny acknowledged the unceded territories** of the ḥənqəmiṇəm (Hunkameenam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples from whose traditional unceded territories she was speaking. As well as other traditional territories where our members are situated, and where we do much of our work.

Jenny also **acknowledged the generous funding from MJEDC** that makes MAP's work possible.

Jenny welcomed participants from **32 MAP member agencies**.

Zoom protocols were reviewed for the meeting

The **Agenda** was outlined. Last minute changes had to be made as with the call for an election the presenters from the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions were unable to attend and present. However, they have re-scheduled for January 2021. The changes to the agenda were approved.

The **June 25 MAP meeting Minutes** were approved

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **MAP received an important announcement from IRCC regarding** gradual resumption of in person services at their offices starting September 21 (attached). Please read the notice for details and procedures going forward.

- **Update from Canadian Council for Refugees**

- Mariana Martinez Vieyra, CCR co-chair: Inland Protection Group.

Mariana described the organization and purpose of CCR specifically its role in advocacy

- **Slide 1: Structure of CCR** – circular collaborative of individual and agency members

There are 3 Working Groups:

*Immigration and Settlement*: everything pertaining to GARS and other non-claimant refugees

*Overseas Protection*: privately sponsored refugees

*Inland Protection*: refers to refugee claimants – Mariana is chair here. Closely aligned to MAP.

+ CCR Executive, Youth Committee, Legal Affairs Committee

**CCR Executive Nominations:**

CCR is looking for nominations for: 5 Executive members: secretary & treasurer and 3 counselors

1 each co-chairs for the 3 working groups

If interested, please see nomination document attached and reach Mariana for position descriptions and your questions at:

[mariana@vast-vancouver.ca](mailto:mariana@vast-vancouver.ca)

Please note: You don't need experience at managerial level as long as your participation is approved by your agency, 1<sup>st</sup> language English not needed.

**Slide 2: - Annual Activities at CCR**

Fall consultation Nov 26 – Dec 11 (previously slated for Vancouver but now online)

IP WG will offer 3 workshops at the upcoming Fall Consultation:

- Covid19 and Refugee Claimants – Jenny M volunteering to organize this one with the WG
- Security Inadmissibility
- Border Issues

Anyone at MAP willing to volunteer?

Other general workshops include LGBTQ+ anti-oppression workshops.

Please bring the western voice to this event – or send Mariana questions to bring up at CCR.

- **A POLL regarding MAP Bulletin was held**

Results of 38 respondents:

1) Do you read the MAP bulletin? YES every week: 55%, Occasionally: 42%

2) Do you read the News Digest? YES all of it: 16%, Part of it: 53%, Sometimes: 21%, Just browse: 11%

3) How do you receive bulletin? Direct: 92%, from colleague: 5%, from MAP website: 5%

4) Has the bulletin been of benefit? Lots: 61%, Sometimes: 37%

5) Would any of the following additions be useful:

Different format: 24%

Arts & Culture section: 26%

Tailoring to special topics: 55%

The poll results will be part of MAP Executive's planning that takes place October 1<sup>st</sup>. Thanks!

## **Agency Updates – Please report verbally or in the chat (attached) on:**

- a) '6 months in' - how the pandemic has affected your agencies' services and how you are responding
- b) refugee claimant specific program updates welcome! Details were copied to chat.

### **Richard Belcham (inasmuch)**

Pandemic has been a challenge – fortunately most of our services could go online. Acquired a small grant from Abbotsford Community Foundation to put laptops in the different suites so the agency could:

- continue with their ESL programs as well as engage with volunteers to form Conversation Circles from as far away as Edmonton & Texas.
- Inasmuch have also been able to expand their hours because of the technology
- Expand the food program run by Tammy that is so needed right now. Serving up to 25 families
- Launched a new merchandising venture [www.inasmuch.ca/store](http://www.inasmuch.ca/store) where you can buy stuff or sponsor a service or necessities for inasmuch residents.
- First 6-month internship starting soon – welcome to Janelle!
- Launched the podcast 'Along the Way' [www.alongthewaystories.com](http://www.alongthewaystories.com) – refugees and RC's and their journeys. 3 episodes available – meet 'the Man in the Airport', Rawan Moon (VAST) and her poetry and Kristi Pinderi who organized the first Pride Parade in Albania.

Challenge to know how many new RC's are arriving or where they are staying.

### **Sireen El-Nashar (Zaytuna Services Society):**

Working with Douglas College – LINC-engaged language class for youth to finish LINC 4 – flyer coming to bulletin for youth.

### **Masa Ketab (Jumpstart Refugee Talent)**

It was very hard to be online mainly because the mentorship program requires the first meeting between mentor and mentee to be face-to-face – but they managed to change.

In fact the technology has helped them grow: Jumpstart has provided many webinars nationally over this time; and it is more convenient for mentors and mentees to meet online as a time-saver for all.

Now:

- Receiving applications for the mentorship program
- Outreach to different industries to acquire more mentors
- Partnering with more settlement agencies to provide workshops like ISSofBC

We serve all refugees including RC's who are eligible to work in Canada in terms of employment – please refer anyone who needs the service to Jumpstart.

### **Derek Chu (Kinbrace)**

All staff left office at outset of COVID, there were no visitors or volunteers at the residence; but the residents and host community members managed to be very resilient and are doing well.

Many people gave extraordinary added support including donations of funds, computers, PPE as well as gift cards from No Frills and Walmart until end of the year to help with food shortages for residents who are not working,

Moe (Mohammed Zaquot), former MAP volunteer, started work as a Housing Support Worker alongside Ryan, and although the pandemic has made work difficult Kinbrace has been able to help newly arrived refugee claimants with housing, and find permanent housing for those moving on throughout the LMR and Fraser Valley.

Starting to work on an employment program at Kinbrace – NEW enterprise!

COVID has meant changes but continue to move forward with exciting future plans.

### **Loren Balisky (Kinbrace)**

Having said goodbye to Fran Gallo in the summer after many years, we now wish to introduce Sophia Underhill as the new Accessing Refugee Protection Ready Tour Coordinator with Kinbrace:

### **Sophia Underhill (Ready Tour)**

Large part of my role is coordinating Ready Tours – Sophia provided a description of the program run in conjunction with RPD. (<https://refugeeclaim.ca/en/>)

Now all tours are virtual - Ready Tours re-started since July on Microsoft Teams 9 (same platform as hearings) happening about every 2 weeks. Good because more than 200 people on accrued waiting list for Ready Tour – working through the list.

Nothing as good as being there in person but they can use photos and descriptions and discuss how COVID impacts process.

Please pass on referrals via website or email to Sophia at [ready@refugeeclaim.ca](mailto:ready@refugeeclaim.ca) mentioning hearing date

Also have **RAD Information sessions** – especially geared to unrepresented appellants – first virtual session on Sept 29 from 10 – 12 – please refer any appellants who need that.

### **Iris (Options)**

Continue to receive new claimant clients and have helped them use the online application process to IRCC, provided culturally appropriate food baskets to claimants in financial difficulty.

Employment services – help with work permits and employment needs. Can refer claimants to Savleen.

### **Wazhma Wakil (Umbrella Health Coop Clinic)**

Provides community-based healthcare services to newcomers including refugees.

NEWS!! Expanding services – adding more primary care providers: doctors, nurses, social workers, physios. Coming online in next few months so agencies can refer clients as patients.

Language support in Arabic, Spanish, Farsi/Dari, Tigrinya.

Procedure: patients have a virtual meeting with doctor, then make an appointment if needed to be seen in person, but support workers (like interpreters) are working virtually to reduce risk.

### **Salih Arif (MOSAIC)**

Providing virtual employment workshops with inasmuch – many participants who gained valuable knowledge.

Foodsafe training for claimants

Virtual program 'Table topics' for claimants to provide a supportive English speaking environment.

### **Alexandra (MOSAIC)**

All services shifted online – completed survey-based needs assessments in March/April to make sure MOSAIC meets client needs – did survey with 150 respondents.

*Some changes made for the pandemic based on survey results are:*

#### **1. Technical access:**

- partnered with Telus to provide phones with data
- refurbished PC 's provided to families

#### **2. Isolation and Loneliness:**

- 'Table topics' – weekly social group for higher level English speakers
- and introduced a lower level English Conversation Circle program for claimants

#### **3. Food access:**

- refer needy clients to DIVERSEcity and others who provide well-funded food services
- provide gift certificates

4. Employment support – continued to offer 1:1 support with resume creation etc.

Lots of new training: Food Safe in Arabic and Farsi, in the next few weeks more FoodSafe and First Aid. Big shift – most new candidates have been in Canada for a longer time before connecting: over last 6 months MOSAIC and their partner agencies have served 242 new refugee clients with most having been here 6 months+. Top source countries: Iran, Mexico, Columbia, Afghanistan, Honduras

### **Rawan Moon (VAST) and Mariana**

*Getting Through It* – every Wednesday classic mental health support program since 2014 – most referrals come from lawyers, IRB and CBSA and other agencies. This program does not overlap with Ready Tour or other claimant hearing preparation programs – it provides trauma-informed mental health support throughout the claimants' journeys.

So please try not to overlap on Wednesday mornings!

*Now What* group – new stress management includes art therapy

*Move and Relax* – everyday group in Farsi and Arabic

Details:

📅 Now What? Time: Mondays, 12:00 PM-1:30 PM Via ZOOM For All refugees

- VAST Getting Through It. Time: Wednesdays, 10:00 AM-12:00 For RCs ONLY
  - MOVE & RELAX. Time: 04:30 PM-5:00 PM Via ZOOM weekly on Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri: GARS
- We now have this activity in Arabic: October 22nd on Thursday 4:30-5:15  
Farsi: October 28th on Wednesday 4:30- 5:15

Register or for questions contact Rawan at [rawan@vast-vancouver.ca](mailto:rawan@vast-vancouver.ca)

### **Bridget Bell (IRB-RPD)**

Update: referrals low because IRCC just recently able to start up eligibility interviews safely.

BC referrals to IRB-RPD (including principals and dependents):

June - 11

July - 21

Aug - 17

Sept so far: 15

Top source countries: Iran, India and Mexico

As of Monday Sept 14 IRB-RPD has returned to in person hearings having completed the compliance to safety measures for the pandemic including plex-glass. All those attending must:

- Complete a self-assessment questionnaire before and on arrival at the office reception
- have their temperature taken on 18<sup>th</sup> floor
- masks are mandatory at all times in the hearing rooms and public areas

MS Teams meetings have been successful so counsel is being asked if they would like to proceed online. Dependent on counsel and parties having required technology to participate, and completion of consent forms.

**Question: Richard** – MS Teams based hearings – this is a great service – is IRB considering continuing into the future? Very helpful for those in the Fraser valley.

Response: It has been successful so it's encouraging.

### **Parisa (MOSAIC)**

Hosted a Picnic and Zumba – very popular and want more, but because of the weather maybe go virtual Wellness sessions:

Adler Uni practicum student in art therapy working with MOSAIC so these art therapy sessions will take place in November – limited to 6 people.

Please refer clients

### **Bahar Taheri (BC Newcomer Camp)**

BC Newcomer Camp – we ran summer camps online – program open to claimant children as well as GARS. Served 62 children, and provided mostly tablets to 27 families – feedback was that families prefer laptops to be able to access LINC and settlement programs.

Hired 6 youth to facilitate programs and 3 were from refugee backgrounds including one youth with a refugee claimant background. Glad to be promoting this mentoring program of refugees by refugees. In the Fall starting free music program for kids from 7 -14 on piano in Surrey – on Saturdays small groups in person. To find out more or sign up:

BC Newcomer Camp - New Music Program: <https://www.bcnewcomercamp.org/newcomers-to-notes>.

### **Muna Amir (SOS)**

Update: there is a new Manager at SOS:

her name is Mahi Khalaf. Email: [mahi.khalaf@issbc.org](mailto:mahi.khalaf@issbc.org) Phone: 604-684-7498 Ext.1649

SOS is providing webinars to claimants regarding housing and their rights under residential tenancy.

PLEASE SEE ADDITIONAL UPDATES IN THE CHAT NOTES ATTACHED TO THE MINUTES

## **Quantitative and qualitative update on Refugee Claimants in the Lower Mainland**

Presenter: Bahar Taheri: BC Refugee Hub

**Service Provider survey** coming out soon – asks what trainings and information you want to see on the Hub. This is for anyone working and/or supporting refugees.

*Completed:*

Aug 11 hosted a webinar on domestic violence and self-care for service providers and for clients

Aug 25 – hosted a webinar on refugee process and updates.

all resources from these 2 webinars are on BC refugee Hub website.

*Coming soon:*

Oct 27: webinar on IFHP program – focus there on claimants

Nov 24: employment webinar with Jumpstart talk about mentoring program, as well as refugee speakers

December 8: – full day conference online: statistical and academic reports – presented by the researchers: UNHCR Canada, Child & Youth Refugee Research, Youth Coalition, ISSofBC, UBC and individual speakers.

Releasing soon: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter claimant statistical bulletin coming out soon.

## **HOUSING FOR REFUGEE CLAIMANTS**

- **Scan of current claimants in need of housing in BC** - Richard Belcham

Trying to get an understanding of how much pressure there is in the system right now – who is seeking housing and how we can adjust our services to relate to the need during the pandemic.

*Feedback:*

**Muna (SOS):** SOS has a family with urgent needs - single mom looking for housing – preferably BC Housing. Low income.

Referred a couple to Kinbrace on Sept 21

Referring singles to shelters.

**Vanessa (Journey Home Community)** – Since September seen 6/7 new referrals – from both border and had to quarantine, and people who have been here 6 months or more – less singles and more a mix of couples and 1 or 2 families.

## **Update on Housing Referral Project – lead agency MOSAIC**

### **Alexandra Dawley & Marzieh Nezakat**

**Update from CHARMS Project** - Alexandra Dawley & Marzieh Nezakat (MOSAIC)

**Alexandra:** Please note new (easy) name for the project: **CHARMS** which stands for Claimant Housing & Referral Management System.

Our (MAP/MOSAIC) project looks to addressing Richard's question – are there RC's in need of housing and where are they? Currently deciding whether we need to create our own database system or can adopt an existing system.

*To date:*

- Held 5 CHARMS Advisory Committee Meetings
- MOSAIC has hired the project coordinator - Marzieh Nezakat – she has worked with vulnerable populations internationally and in Canada. Marzieh has a PhD in linguistics as well as project experience.

*Currently:*

- Currently facilitating an in-depth desk review and environmental scan - looking at data systems that others are using. We have discovered that Apricot may be a system worth analyzing more.
- Looking for a technical consultant who will help create a 'Requirements Document' which includes all the needs we have of the system and potential users.

**Marzieh:**

Greeted everyone for first time.

She is designing the online survey to reach province wide stakeholders – to see what service providers are managing right now - how they are doing their jobs, as well as what the various stakeholders need.

Following the survey there will be 1:1 interviews with stakeholders to go to depth.

MOSAIC will launch survey very soon and also arrange the in-person interviews.

**Questions:**

**Bahar:** Govt has just announced funding to purchase hotels – have any of those funds been earmarked for refugee claimants?

Response: we have not heard if any of these funds are coming to claimants.

**May Shihadeh** (Royal Roads University MA studies in Inter-Cultural Communication)

Also volunteers with settlement services and she feels there are not enough services in Victoria for claimants like there are in Vancouver.

**Alexandra** responded that in terms of CHARMS they would be happy to include May in the survey and interviews.

Contact me privately about additional services in Victoria or possible bridging services from mainland

**May** thank you, and any other agency who knows of services please contact me for Victoria.

Specially Richard – about housing which is needed.

**Bahar** – there are organizations on the island through BCSIS though not as robust as BCSIS Stream B here in LMR. Here is the list of the BCSIS Stream A funded programs - that refugee claimants are eligible for:

[http://bcrefugeehub.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/BC-Settlement-and-Integration-Services\\_Jan2019.pdf](http://bcrefugeehub.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/BC-Settlement-and-Integration-Services_Jan2019.pdf)

**BREAK:** The participants divided into 2 groups: Settlement and viewing the film: Borderstory by Erin Glanville Goehen.

A feedback poll was launched re: this MAP meeting – thank you everyone for your participation.

11:45 am: Adjourn. **Next Meeting:** October 22, 2020. Theme: Employment and Refugee Claimants.

**AGENCY UPDATES FROM CHAT (attached)**

*MAP gratefully acknowledges the funding provided by Ministry of Jobs, Employment Development and Competitiveness, without whom our work would not be possible.*