

MAP Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 22, 2020 - 9:30AM – 11:50 AM

Attendees: Jenny Lam (Options), Richard Belcham (inasmuch), Tammy Johnson (inasmuch), Michelle Murray-Schlitt (inasmuch), Donnel Schmidt (inasmuch), Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC), Salih Arif (MOSAIC), Marzieh Nezakat (MOSAIC), Jacqueline Sarvini (MOSAIC), Parissa Roofigari (MOSAIC), Tracy Tang (MOSAIC), Saleem Spindari (MOSAIC), Diana Barry (Vancity), Fran Gallo, Sara Lopez (VAST), Mariana Martinez Vieyra (VAST), Jhevoi Melville (VAST), Rawan Moon (VAST), Rainer Nicdau (MSDPR), Valentina Stanciu (MSDPR), Paige Wang (MSDPR), Guadelupe Chebib (CNH), Sophia Underhill (Ready Tour), Derek Chu (Kinbrace), Ryan Reid (Kinbrace), Moe Zaqout (Kinbrace), Adriana Zepeda (Kinbrace), Dustin Lupick (HSABC), Russell Wood (Canadian Red Cross), Sabrina Dumitra (AMSSA), Koyali Burman (SVNH), James Grunau (JHC), Brad Kinnie (JHC), Vanessa Roth (JHC), Laura Mannix (DIVERSEcity), Adrienne Bale (DIVERSEcity), Ann Kishor (IRCC), Leslye Brown (IRCC), Iris Solorzano (Options), Patricia Castillo (Options), Ana Yansie (Options), Mahi Khalaf (SOS), Katya Quintanilla (SOS), Samuel Chan (SUCCESS), Ali Mustafa (Independent), Masa Kateb (JumpStart Refugee Talent), Masha Rademakers (NSMS), Dardana Shushka (Archway CS), Richard Soo (East Catholic Church), Sireen El-Nashar (Zaytuna), Jolene Grant (CBSA), Katherine Zhang (CBSA), Alexandra Currie (CBSA), Joanne Jesmer (CBSA), Gelsomina D'Angelo (La Boussole), Mercy MacTribouy (Belkin House), Jenny Moss (MAP)

Welcome from Co-Chair: Richard Belcham

Richard acknowledged the unceded territories of the Sto:lo Nation from whose traditional unceded territories on the river he was speaking. As well as other traditional territories where our members are situated, and where we do much of our work.

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

Richard welcomed participants from **26 MAP member agencies**.

Zoom protocols were reviewed for the meeting

The **Agenda** was outlined.

The **September 24 MAP meeting Minutes** were approved with the following changes:

- Trixie Ling (Flavours of Hope) was accidentally omitted from the original draft minutes as attending. Her name has been inserted in the updated version.
- The Ready Tour update mentioned RAP info session – should have read RAD info session. Likewise corrected in this later version.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Richard described how to use the new MAP website SEARCH TOOL in the Member's section.**

- **Results of MAP Executive Planning Meeting Oct 1st**

MAP Executive met October 1st in person, outside and distanced at Options CS kindly hosted by Jenny Lam.

Following the Strategic Planning that took place in 2018 it was appropriate to update MAP's plans for 2021 according to our goals and feedback from membership.

Here are the decisions that were taken and are now referred to MAP membership for approval:

- **To provide more public education:**
 - a) 4-part lecture series in January, April, September, November
 - b) expanded World Refugee Day event – hopefully online AND in person
 - c) 2 'Starting over' events in Surrey + another municipality – possibly Burnaby.
- To support this MAP will **re-establish the Information Working Group** and calls upon agencies and individuals to volunteer and make their voice heard in this important endeavour. If you would like to find out more please email or call Jenny at MAP.
- MAP will **make contact with other refugee claimant networks throughout Canada** to strengthen collaboration, advocacy and support to claimants.
- A **MAP sustainability plan** for future funding will be further investigated and presented to MAP membership at a later date.
- The **MAP Terms of Reference** (along with the HWG TOR) have been updated and will be presented for MAP member approval at the November meeting.

Presentation: Employment Services for Refugee Claimants A panel of experts

Richard shared a short video pinpointing the issue of 'Canadian experience' for newcomer job seekers. The presentations looked at this and other challenges for refugee claimants and how the agencies respond.

Presenters:

Masa Kateb: Jumpstart Refugee Talent

Employment Program: Welcome Talent Canada

Please see attached infoCard 'Information & Call to Action'

KEY Message: *Refugee Talent Hub* is core at Jumpstart – forms a bridge between employers and those looking for work.

Welcome Talent Canada – mentorship program giving connections for claimants looking for work

Please contact Masa for alliances with Jumpstart.

Shelley Dhaliwal: Options Community Services

Temporary Residents Specialist - BC Settlement & Integration Services program.

Please see attached slideshow

KEY Message: lack of education or skills, language, transport problems can all be barriers to successful job acquisition – Options helps claimants prepare to be job ready. In terms of 'Canadian Experience'

they help refugees identify what they have done in the past that can relate to jobs here – even finding suitability for those with no paid experience.

Salih Arif: MOSAIC

Settlement & Work Access Worker / Refugee Settlement & Integration Program

Parisa Roofigari: MOSAIC

Settlement Outreach Worker

Please see attached slideshow

KEY message: MOSAIC encourages refugees to volunteer to gain that Canadian experience. At the agency there are many staff and volunteers who are working for MOSAIC who eventually came through their Employment Program.

Questions and Answers:

Q: How do you help clients overcome the Canadian experience question?

Parissa – volunteering here at MOSAIC in events etc.

Masa - must work at both ends with both refugee job seekers and employers –

- empower and represent and advocate for refugees

- talk to their diversity & inclusion departments – advocate for refugees to be a specific part of their mandate of inclusion. And educate about refugee talent.

Shelley – educate the wider community about refugees

Q: What can we do to advocate?

Shelley – raising awareness of skill levels of RC's – peeling off barriers that block clients and employers meeting each other. Networking and sharing stories. Talk to your own family.

Salih: 'Table Topics' is a MOSAIC program that helps clients share their experiences and skills to help each other.

To provide claimants opportunities in our organizations – as volunteers, especially, during COVID.

Richard: At WRD inasmuch hosted a local event with the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce called 'Why hire a refugee?' – encouraging employers to take a minute to really look through resumes.

Sharing on LinkedIn.

Q: What is one thing as a service provider you could put in place to help RC's gain employment?

Parisa – partnerships with employers like Lush etc. – established connections get the job opportunities

Provide excellent training: our statistics show that

783 RC's accessed employment services – 425 of them secured a job!

Masa – make the best out of what is available – don't duplicate – connect with other agencies who offer other services, but Jumpstart will do the advocacy work.

Salih – building relations in the community and with employers, making appropriate referrals.

Shelley – training and employer connections – and specialized services.

Quantitative and qualitative update on Refugee Claimants in the Lower Mainland

Presenter: Richard Belcham provided the report from Bahar Taheri as she could not attend.

1. The Q2 and Q3 Refugee Claimant Bulletin will be released soon.

2. Webinar coming up on October 27th on the IFH program - overview and updates due to Covid 19. Registration is open and link can be found on the BC Refugee Hub, and here:

Presentation: CBSA Quarterly Update to MAP

PART A) Update from the Immigration Holding Centre

Katherine Zhang: Acting Manager, Detention Operations and

Alex Currie: Acting Manager of Detentions

(Sharon Sandhu not able to attend. Katherine is filling in as she has actually left the IHC position and is handing over MAP Contact person designation to Alex Currie who started on Monday.)

Last update was in May and since then the facility is opening up slowly to visitors in a controlled way. Visitors must be pre-approved and follow all COVID protocols.

Legal counsel, friends and family may now visit if pre-arranged.

Medical staff there 24/7 – new arrivals isolate for 14 days and health monitored daily for COVID to protect rest of detainees and staff.

Alternative to Detention Program: Jolene GRANT – Community Liaison Officer for Pacific Region

Jolene introduced **Joanne Jesbir** – acting community liaison officer in training currently with Jolene.

Voice Reporting system – since last update this system was largely on hold because of COVID

But now Pacific region has opened up for enrollments for voice recording – 1400 files to review and 200 left to do to. The vast majority will be able to convert to voice reporting.

This will be a big help for those in Chilliwack or Fraser Valley – will have full 24 hours to report.

And Ottawa will send reminders too.

So unlikely to see failure to report – 2 reminders then more serious follow up.

Pacific Region is leading the way of enrollment in voice recording during COVID. Some other parts of Canada are yet to open up to voice reporting.

Enrollments can take place at the downtown office or at IHC.

Community Case Management – have reviewed the vast majority of the long term cases – have referred majority to Belkin House for high risk clients or Kensington House run by John Howard Society.

there out of detention.

Programming in the community has opened up for them.

Kensington House – just opened up in spring – 2 placed there – home based on Elgin St in Vancouver.

Individual has more freedom. Learns to provide for themselves in terms of life skills – works with John Howard Society to get work permits and any necessary ID.

One about to graduate from Kensington House – very positive case because had mental health challenges.

Lots of recent successes now things are opening up.

Questions & Answers

Q: Is Chatr allowed for voice reporting?

A: No to Chatr or Freedom: main providers only, like Telus, FIDO

Q: What about Koodo

A: Yes, with a contract.

Richard updated MAP on our conversation with CBSA about the **NGO presence at IHC** they have requested. Covid delayed the start up but now they are interested in having:

- Someone who at the start would be attending half a day or one day per week.
- Preferably – would like one contact who can refer out to appropriate agencies for security issues
- Needs to be an agency/person with thorough knowledge for detainees.
- There is a room with socially distanced protocols for Covid in place

If you are interested or have questions please get in touch with Jenny at info@mapbc.org

Q: how many RC's are in detention center now, and are some ready for release?

A: 13 detainees in at present – 2 or 3 in process of moving out. Not many here.

Comment from Sabrina (AMSSA) – In terms of NGO presence at the IHC funding for NGO's will need to be discussed.

Richard: Yes, we definitely must discuss, but it is heartening to get the conversation started.

Q: – are there videoconferencing facilities to allow detainees to do a ready tour remotely on Microsoft Teams?

A: We would need to look into that with the IRB to see if it was possible. The equipment is available.

Q: - Are there any ways CBSA reach out to NGO's when a detainee is ready to leave? How do you help those who are ready to leave with their housing?

Jolene: If person is released under terms and conditions then they are released according to ATD program:

- high risk clients go to Belkin House facilities
- medium risk clients go to Kensington House if they are willing

More likely your question is about Low Risk:

- low risk clients go via John Howard Society who look for transition housing through their contacts like an SRO, shelter or community residencies like Kinbrace

If you have a space available you can let CBSA know and we will ask John Howard to check it out as it must be suitable so that the client can abide by terms and requirements

Q: who should we contact if we have space available?

Jolene – please send to our generic email box – messages go to Jolene, Joanne or management team

General inbox: CBSAFPACDistCLO/ASFCFPACDistALC@cra-arc.gc.ca

AND:

Jolene.grant@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca

604-764-4208

Joanne.jesmer@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca

(604) 619-0706

Q: Can you please provide more information regarding the "risk" that you are mentioning?

Normally those at Belkin are high risk with a strong criminal history with violence – may be a danger to themselves or public. Often have addiction issues and/or mental health issues.

Belkin House can assure that the clients get a full program and supervision so they get to all their appointments especially in terms of medications and addiction, and mental health programs. As they get better and address their problems, they gain more freedom so that they can get up to 8 hours/day of freedom within Belkin House.

Also have to be sure they will comply with immigration requirements of reporting.

Medium risk – those who just need an extra bit of help to function – minor criminality, some addiction issues but can be brought back on track – medium risk is 90 day stay (at Kensington House) usually.

Low risk – just need someone to help them with their lives – permits, housing. Need to develop a relationship with a caseworker.

Q: What is CBSA's expectations of an NGO on site?

Richard: CBSA said one day or half day with an NGO agency on site who can address all issues for detainees or refer them.

We don't have a lot of information right now – but please let Jenny Moss know if you have the slightest interest or questions.

Housing Update

Update from CHARMS Project - Marzieh Nezakat (MOSAIC)
(BC Refugee Claimant Housing & Referral Management System)

Steps taken so far:

- Advisory Committee has held 5 monthly meetings
- Marzieh was hired as project coordinator
- Scoping exercise: of the housing inventories, related referral and data systems in Canada and internationally (this project is province-wide)
- New assistant: Jacqueline Sarvini
- Tech consultant hired: Hussein Idris who will create the Requirements Document for the system
- Participatory approach so everyone's expertise and experience needed – **survey created**. It will be sent out very soon. 2 reasons for the survey:
 - a) current practices regarding refugee claimant housing
 - b) system requirements to better serve refugee claimants in housing. Encourage everyone to respond to the survey – it will be sent out to all MAP members.
- After that there will be 1:1 interviews – please contact us if you want to participate in a 1:1 interview via new email: BCCHARMS@mosaicbc.org. Interviews will start first week of November.

Q: Are you looking for one person per agency for the interviews and survey?

A: We have created a very comprehensive list of stakeholders in BC: agencies, emergency housing providers, govt.

Interviews can be joint interviews.

If there are multiple emails Marzieh can send out emails to more than one employee.

Agency Updates – Please report verbally or in the chat (attached) about refugee claimant news:

Sophia Underhill (Ready Tour)

Ready Tour – Nov 4th

Lots more space in Ready Tours than before, so please refer clients to Sophia at: ready@refugeeclaim.ca
If agency staff haven't been on a tour do ask if you can join.

Rawan Moon (VAST)

- Latino group – for whole family once a month starting October 29 (see notes from CHAT)
- Arabic speakers – Oct 29 start held bi-weekly – see CHAT
- Getting Through It: everything related to refugee process – see CHAT.

Masa Ketab (Jumpstart Refugee Talent) Always seeking mentors for those refugees interested in social work – please consider becoming a mentor for a refugee in your program.

see: <http://www.rcip.ca/welcome-talent> for mentorship program including an explanatory video.

Mahi Khalaf (SOS – ISS-of-BC)

Introduced herself to MAP as the new Manager of SOS at ISSofBC.

She's been at ISSofBC for 5 years though new to working with claimants.

Looks forward to collaborating with everyone.

SOS is back to in-person support by appointment, and back to organizing workshops for clients around BC Housing and Co-op Housing and in person Latino support group in collaboration with Aids Vancouver.

Ann Kishor (IRCC)

Manager of Immigration for BC & Yukon for IRCC

In-person service for biometrics started again on Oct 5.

Next week we will re-start eligibility interviews as well.

Mohammed Zaqout (Kinbrace)

Described his podcast with Richard's program *Along the Way*: www.alongthewaystories.com

<https://www.alongthewaystories.com/episodes/4-stateless-to-statusless>

Rawan also – Episode 3.

Also: **Mohammed** is setting up a for profit Diversity coop – fostering just, inclusive projects – to manage organizational change, support research and refugee job seekers. Solid State Industries project.

At starting stage and need one or two more members to join the co-op. In a month or two we should be able to generate profits. More details in chat – Contact Mohammed at mfzaqout@gmail.com if interested.

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

11:50 am: Adjourn. **Next Meeting:** November 26, 2020. Theme: Neighbourhood Houses

Attached:

- **Presentations from Jumpstart Refugee Talent, Options CS and MOSAIC**
- **AGENCY UPDATES FROM CHAT (attached)**

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