

MAP Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 28, 2020 - 9:30AM – 12:00 PM

Attendees: Jenny Lam (Options), Richard Belcham (inasmuch), Kelly Czmielewski (MMHA), Negar Azmudeh (IRB), Bridget Bell (IRB), Teresa Fuller (MCC), Andrew Bauman MCC, Savleen Kaur (Options), Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC), Jackie Sarvini (MOSAIC), Mariana Martinez Vieyra (VAST), Wazhma Wakil (Umbrella)), Adrienne Bale (DIVERSEcity), Maria Cervino (Kiwassa), Rainer Nicdau (MSDPR), Paige Levirs (MSDPR), Valentina Stanciu (MSDPR), Masha Rademakers (NSMS), Mohammed Zaqout (Kinbrace), Ryan Reid (Kinbrace), Loren Balisky (Kinbrace), Michelle Murray-Schlitt (inasmuch), Bahar Taheri (BC Refugee Hub), Joni Rose (MUNI), Alex Kang (MUNI), Leslye Brown (IRCC), Tammy Johnson (inasmuch), Derek Chu (Kinbrace), Fran Gallo (Kinbrace), Sophia Underhill (Ready Tour), Grace Potma (Roots), Mahak Mahmoodi (Red Cross), Sharon Kaur (Red Cross), Cloe Clayton (Red Cross), Masa Kateb (JumpStart Refugee Talent), Felix Ngalla (Baobab), Dallas Posavad (Oak Bay Welcome Houses), Ann Barnard Ball (New Hope CS), Kay Sarai (PCRS), Tess Acton (Lawyer), Mahi Khalef (SOS-ISSofBC), Angela Kim (SUCCESS), Julia Wu (bc211), Sara Lopez (VAST), Jhevoi Melville (VAST), Rawan Moon (VAST), Elena Hack (VAST), Diana Barry (Vancity), Kathleen Cashin (Covenant House), Sireen El-Nashar (Zaytuna), James Grunau (JHC), Brad Kinnie (JHC), Vanessa Roth (JHC), Dustin Lupick (HSABC), Patricia Mahecha (JHC), Ali Mustafa (Independent), Yola Vargas (Independent), Paige Slight (Independent), Jenny Moss (MAP)

Regrets: Sabrina Dumitra (AMSSA)

Welcome from Co-Chair: Richard Belcham

Richard acknowledged and thanked the Sto:lo peoples from whose traditional unceded territories 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 Ministry of Municipal Affairs (formerly MJEDC)** that makes MAP's work possible.

Richard welcomed participants from **40 MAP member agencies**.

First time introductions:

- **Dallas Posavad – Oak Bay Welcome Houses** (new MAP member). Just gained municipal permission to provide transitional housing (with wraparound services from VIRCS) to refugee Claimants. First on Vancouver Island.
- **Tess Acton** – Immigration and refugee lawyer with MKS Immigration Law (Victoria/Vancouver).
- **Kay Sarai** – along with Vicki Martin – PCRS (Surrey) REACH program that provides case management services to immigrant youth <24 and outreach.
- **Elena (VAST)** – expressive arts therapist.
- **Sharan** – Emergency Services Coordinator at Canadian Red Cross

Zoom protocols were reviewed for the meeting.

The **Agenda** was outlined.

The **November 26, 2020 meeting Minutes** were approved

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1) Revised MAP Terms of Reference

MAP's revised TOR were adopted by an email vote from Partner Members on December 18.

23 votes in favour, 1 abstention and no votes against. The remaining 4 agencies missed the deadline.

Thank you for your support with this updating – if you need a copy of the Terms of Reference please download it from the Member's area of the website. If you are not already signed up to the Member's Area please do so in order to access information, reports etc.

2. MAP Co-Chair Nominations

The executive would like to announce the annual process of inviting **nominations** to the position of co-chair prior to the announcement in February. With the updating of TOR there is the opportunity for co-chairs to serve a second (2 year) term under special circumstance. Since the BC CHARMS project requires a co-chair's active participation Richard has been busy with this project that will continue for 1+ years. Therefore, he would like to put his name forward for another term in order to provide continuity and Executive division of labour.

Richard invited Jenny Moss to describe the nomination & election process

Election will be at February MAP meeting

Anyone who is a MAP member can nominate a willing candidate, but all candidates must be MAP members at the PARTNER level. (check on mapbc.org website for partner level agencies)

The nominator must:

- a) provide some background information about the candidate relevant to this position
- b) describe why/how the person is a good candidate
- c) mention any particular skills that the candidate will bring to the position.

Nominations to be received by February 12 (to Jenny M).

Co-chair workload: Richard described workload though it varies:

- when there are special projects like BC CHARMS there is more to attend to
- very light over the summer and in December when there are no meetings.
- some emails to attend to
- weekly MAP Executive meeting of 30 mins – 1 hour.
- MAP meetings to chair on alternate months.
- Jenny M provides support to the co-chairs administratively.

Please contact either Richard (richard@inasmuch.ca) or Jenny (jenny.lam@options.bc.ca) if you have questions.

3. Update on NGO Presence at the Immigration Holding Centre – Jenny Lam

Jenny Lam has taken on the responsibility at executive level for the project to involve an NGO presence at

the Immigration Holding Centre.

MAP has been in ongoing discussion with CBSA about our agencies providing a supportive presence to detainees at the new Immigration Holding Center (IHC). We can announce that we are developing a MOU with CBSA at their request, that will be shared with the 10 agencies who showed interest in participating, prior to a meeting to be held in the first week of February with CBSA. The purpose of this meeting is for agencies to ask questions of CBSA based on the MOU; and following that we expect that agencies will confirm their intention to be included as service providers on a rotating basis. CBSA wishes the service to begin, at first remotely, as soon as possible depending on the pandemic.

Question: what kind of services are proposed in the MOU?

Jenny – it is still in development – the MOU will be with MAP but will be shared soon. We envisage a weekly rotating schedule of agencies assisting at the IHC but at this point it is too early to say and many of these issues will be sorted out at the meeting. Lots of details to be discussed.

Request for acronyms used to be explained:

Richard provided meanings:

- IHC – Immigration Holding Centre
- NGO – non-governmental organization
- CBSA – Canada Border Services Agency
- MOU – Memorandum of Understanding.

Presentation: Part 1: Pathway to Hope: An introduction for Refugee Claimants.

Presented by: **Kelly Czmielewski**, BC Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

Richard announced that the presentation would be Part 1 of a 2-part MAP presentation on Mental Health. Part 2 would take place at the MAP meeting on February 18 when we will learn about mental health support to those on the frontline helping refugee claimants.

Mariana Martinez Vieyra (VAST) will moderate the Q&A after today's presentation.

Richard introduced **Kelly who is the Acting Director, Social Sector Partnerships and Planning** for the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. Prior to joining the BC Public Service in 2008, Kelly worked with victims of crime, provided youth and family counselling in alternative schools and worked as an outreach counsellor for children, youth and families. Kelly has worked in the Ministry of Children and Family Development as a Child and Youth Mental Health Clinician, Practice Consultant as well as in policy. Kelly's diverse experience from front line to policy and practice provides her with a unique perspective on mental health and addictions.

The presentation slides are attached.

Additional notes from the presentation as specific to newcomers:

- MMHA is not a service delivery ministry – develops policy – so hearing from refugee claimant serving agencies is a priority. You can reach Kelly via an email to MAP.
- MMHA created in 2017 – for all BC residents. Came about as a response to opioid crisis.
- Sept 2018: Met with 18 stakeholder agencies and people with lived experience representing newcomers to develop their plan who provided the following feedback:
 - called for better integration and collaboration between services specifically communication between all levels of government with service providers.

- funding & training were high need areas for settlement-informed and trauma-informed practices.
- absence of multilingual and culturally appropriate services.
- Pathway to Hope as a 3-year plan came about as a result.

FOR RC interest:

- ICY teams – services for children and youth >18 with substance abuse issues provided at school or other location.
- Has been discussion to provide help to refugee youth in specific locations across the province
- Mental Health in Schools
- Primary Care Strategy – culturally appropriate – using a network model working together
- Investments in ‘Bounce-back’ and ‘Living Life to the Full’ programs – cognitive behavioral help therapy
- Foundry Centers – bringing services together for youth aged 18 – 24 – one stop shop. Works with refugee claimant youth and actively ensures that IFH will not be a barrier to accessing care

Acknowledge that services are not focused on migrant communities or refugee claimants. Kelly would like to raise the profile of RC mental health needs and wants to learn more about system gaps – and challenges for RC’s

Followed by questions and an open discussion on refugee claimant mental health moderated by **Mariana Martinez Vieyra** BC Provincial Refugee Mental Health Coordinator; Clinical Supervisor- Vancouver Association for the Survivors of Torture (VAST)

Mariana thanked Kelly for coming to explain the program and that she wants to hear from us, the experts.

Questions & Comment

Are the peer support workers on your teams including people with lived experience?

Answer: Peer support program is fairly new – will be meeting with (Alex Kang’s) group (BCSIS) In February to discuss this and will identify peer support that will greatly facilitate uptake of services.

Stigma is a big problem as a barrier to service

Response: racism and stigma is a concern for the govt as a whole – at MMHA it’s a lens for our work to bring in as many diverse perspectives and challenge our stigmas. But it is difficult to remove stigma and we are tackling it continually. Recognizing its existence and challenging it is crucial. It’s a long road.

Mariana expanded on the intersecting stigma that RC’s carry about their unsure immigration status and mental health issues that may be hidden for fear they might affect a refugee decision. Even self-imposed stigma.

Language barriers – interpretation and communication challenges around cultural sensitivity

Response: recognize that the services are not multilingual enough and trying to push boundaries to avoid the usual cultural default to white settlers.

In general agencies are slow to change

We don’t have language resources – but we are aware that these communities are struggling and needy.

Exacerbation of precarious immigration status

Additional MAP comment: Need services in first language and culturally sensitive with trauma informed interpreters to breach the gaps in communication.

Navigating services, delivery and waiting times

Need for consistency in program delivery to refugee claimants.

RC's often say they didn't know they could ask for services because of their immigration status – and wonder if it will affect their cases. We need more outreach and introduction to the services.

CBT– cognitive behaviour therapy - recommended that it should be a 2nd line of treatment when working with traumatized clients.

Response: In ICY teams the work is not focused on CBT – recognize that it doesn't work with different cultures and there are other therapies to work with different populations.

Often reach out to Immigrant / Refugee centers to work with them for the cultural programs.

But ONLINE programs are CBT based and won't help with trauma.

The Mental health breakout Room extended the conversation

BREAK: The participants divided into 3 groups: Mental Health, Settlement & Housing

Quantitative and qualitative update on Refugee Claimants in the Lower Mainland

Presenter: Bahar Taheri: BC Refugee Hub (ISSofBC)

Recent and upcoming webinars:

Had a webinar on research reports with 3 different presenters – video and slides will be posted.

Feb 10 – with UNHCR Canada to discuss labour mobility program.

March 10 - with Richard and Shanga (Shoe Project) on importance of Storytelling for refugee advocacy

Refugee claimant bulletin coming soon for 4th quarter 2020: facts from ISSofBC & MOSAIC Stream B services.

MAP Information Working Group: Michelle Murray-Schlitt (inasmuch)

'In Focus' lecture series starting March 4 at 7:00pm

The IWG is working on 4 speaking events to engage the public– the first is called "A Bitter Pill – utilizing the skills of refugee women doctors'

Billed to take place close to International Women's Day the event features an all-women panel and the issues of discrimination and systemic barriers that prevent International Medical Graduates practicing in Canada.

Speakers:

Zarghoona Wakil – MOSAIC – who came as a doctor to Canada

Rosemary Poliuk – who is bringing the Human Rights Complaint here in BC.

Dr. Maureen Mayhew – Clinical Professor at the School of Population and Public Health, UBC

And the moderator is MAP's own member: Tess Acton – refugee lawyer from MKS Law in Victoria

Registration information is coming out shortly – please pass along to your friends and communities – we would love to see everyone connect with this important issue.

Joni Rose – MUNI

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs has posted a Notice to Vendors (NTV21-RCH-001) on BC Bid regarding an upcoming procurement for Refugee Claimant Housing form. We would like to encourage you to review the full NTV (see the Supplier Attachments Exist folder) and submit any feedback and questions to Settlement@gov.bc.ca as it will help inform the Call for Responses. Questions will only be answered through this process so that it will remain an open, fair and transparent process to all possible respondents.

<http://www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca/open.dll/submitLogin?disID=46645225>

James – Journey Home Community

2 years ago MAP provided a research-based report to the provincial government on refugee housing with 6 recommendations of which 2/3 are being responded to now. However, the call for a **refugee claimant reception center** was not funded. The idea is that newly arrived refugee claimants would be able to stay at a central gathering point so no-one would be without a bed on arrival and they could stay for a 2-4 weeks before moving on.

Journey Home feels strongly about this need - a year ago they contracted a consultant: Loyal Mackeroff who works on concept design. Covid halted everything but the project has been recently revived with funding that permits JHC to move forwards. Loyal; will contact some MAP members to poll those working with refugee claimants to get feedback and expectations on the subject of a reception center, and there may be a survey.

Update on BC CHARMS - Housing Referral & Data Management System

Alexandra Dawley (MOSAIC)

Acknowledged funding from MUNI and the support of MAP & the Advisory Committee

- New systems logo launched.
- In addition to cross-jurisdictional scan the team collected province wide data – thanks to all:
 - 78 stakeholder reps in survey & interviews
 - Interviewed 50 people with lived RC experience – to make sure system meets their needs.
- And a full Report that will be created in many languages and will be shared widely within the MAP community and outside including housing providers, shelters etc.
- Tech consultant has drafted a systems requirement document – it has been reviewed by Joni Rose, MAP Exec, MOSAIC and Advisory Committee. Next step will be to create a systems document that might be a stand-alone document and will provide more detail about
- Met with 3 potential tech consultants – this person will be with us for the design as well as working with the chosen vendor and through testing.
- Met with Software vendors – TBD in following weeks: Apricot, HIFUS and others
- Also identified a privacy and security consultant to develop a safe and confidential system
Lots been happening behind the scenes and we look forward to revealing the new system soon.

Agency Updates –

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

- **Richard (Along the Way podcasts)**
New episodes available at www.alongthewaystories.com
- **Sophia Underhill (Ready Tours)**
Ready Tours (support to claimants in getting prepared for their hearings) taking place twice a month right now – no waitlist.
All hearings are virtually on MS Teams – so the tour is also on MS Teams so refugees can practice with the technology before their hearing. And because its virtual the Ready Tour is accessible province wide.
- **Nazanin (Rainbow Refugee)**
Serving LGBTQ and HIV+ refugees and refugee claimants

Weekly drop-ins to give hearing support – changed to Thursdays – 6:30 – 8:30
support@rainbowrefugee.ca

- **Mariana Martinez V (Inland Protection Committee at CCR)**

CCR is suggesting developing input from claimants pre- and post-hearing? The idea would be to be able to provide information for CCR to gather evidence to present to IRB.

If you are in close contact with RC's bring their ideas to Mariana for the CCR.

- **Diana Barry (Vancity)**

We provided information in 7 different languages (via MAP bulletin) about how refugees and refugee claimants can apply for COVID-related benefits—we would like to know if anyone has used them; and if you have any feedback or other needs.

https://www.vancity.com/SharedContent/documents/Covid_support/Vancity_Fact-Sheet_Covid_Government_Benefits_Central.pdf

Presentation: Immigration Refugee Board Update

Negar Azmudeh, ADC Western Region

Negar introduced herself and mentioned she really appreciates the work of MAP members who do all the 'heavy lifting' in their support to refugee claimants.

Please see the RPD slides attached.

- **Practice notice** updates – please check the IRB website regularly.
- Update on **Task Force on less complex cases** – paper-based hearings.
- **RPD Virtual hearings for all** claims – on MS Teams platform – they have developed training materials and resources.
- **No in-person hearings** unless there is an application by a claimant who can show why remote hearing is not appropriate and why they should have an in-person hearing before they re-start again. Must balance health/safety and access to justice.
(Questions in chat)
IRB will revisit this approach before July 5, 2021 to assess and see if changes are needed.
- **GRTF Task Force** – national team of members who take a trauma informed approach to gender related claims. There are 6 GRTF members in the western region.
- **SEE SLIDE for referral statistics and output at IRB**

QUESTIONS

Question: How are the virtual hearings being held for those refugee claimants in Detention centers such as the BC IHC in Surrey or correctional facilities?

Answer: They can be in person if the facility does not allow MS Teams. Detainees are a perfect example of 'exceptional circumstances' because they need to have their hearings sooner and cannot be delayed.

In this case the Member may not be present – may be remote.

Bridget Bell added: Video conferencing is available to the Fraser Regional Corrections Centre – and new CBSA IHC.

Question: Are exceptions being made for hearing impaired claimants? Can they require an in-person hearing?

Answer: Can apply as a reason for an in-person hearing. But RC should articulate why they should have it NOW - while there are few hearings – so inability & urgency are both important reasons.

Question: You mentioned the number of pages is increased from 20 to 50, is it on one side or double sided?

Answer: It's a fax – so one sided. So, 50 sides

Question: Many clients are having their hearings re-scheduled often. Why?

Answer: the pandemic meant that necessarily hearings were halted. Sometimes it happens more than once for example if there are issues with MS Teams in some cases. Depends on individual circumstances as we really try not to postpone any cases.

Richard thanked Negar for her presentation and the IRB for their collaboration with MAP.

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

Adjourned 12:00 PM.

Next Meeting: Thursday February 18th, 9:30 am – Mental Health Support to Frontline Workers with Refugees; presented by Asli Kucukbumin.

NOTE – the February meeting will be one week earlier than usual to avoid conflict with the BCSIS Summit.

MAP gratefully acknowledges the funding provided by Ministry of Municipal Affairs, without whom our work would not be possible.