

MAP Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 24, 2022 - 9:30AM – 12:00 PM

Attendees: Thanh Lam (MPNH), Jenny Lam (Options), Janet Dench (CCR), Savleen Kaur (Options), Ana Yansie Parada (Options), Patricia Castillo (Options), Brad Kinnie (JHC), Roberto Ortega (JHC), Vanessa Roth (JHC), Barry Growe (JHC), Carillon Kinley (IRCC), Sharon Johal (IRCC), Katie Loewen (IRB), Marissa Deweerdt (IRB), Marzieh Nezakat (MOSAIC), Mssko Wakil (MOSAIC), Luisa Hernandez (MOSAIC), Daniel Michael (MOSAIC), Monika Isaak (Archway CS), Geeta Bhardwaj (Archway CS), Louisa Brett (Covenant House), Arman Zamani (Burnaby NH), Nazanin Moghadami (Rainbow Refugee), Joni Rose (MUNI), Alex Kang (MUNI), Paige Levirs (MSDPR), Sarah Mills (Inasmuch), Kelly Rader (Inasmuch), Loren Balisky (Kinbrace), Ute Warkentin (Kinbrace), Masi Allahverdi (Ready Tour), Derek Chu (Kinbrace), Adriana Zepeda (Kinbrace), Wilfred Thariki (Kinbrace), Fran Gallo, Sadiq Mohibi (SOS-ISSofBC), Julia Wu (bc211), Abeer Hatab (REACH Clinic), Sara Lopez (VAST), Mariana Martinez V (VAST), Winnie Lee (ICAGV) Maria Cervino (Kiwassa NH), Huda Bolbolan (SVNH), Carlos Sandoval (PCRS), Sireen El-Nashar (Zaytuna), Ali Mustafa (Muslim Food Bank), Richard Soo (ECC), Yola Vargas, Jenny Moss (MAP)

Regrets: Ann Ball (New Hope), Ana Maria Bustamente (Burnaby Family Life), Masha Rademakers (Impact North Shore)

Welcome from Co-Chair: Thanh Lam

MAP acknowledged that our work is carried out on the traditional, ancestral, unceded and occupied territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations (Vancouver), and also in the territories of the Hunkamin and Squamish (Burnaby) and lastly in the lands of the Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen, and Tsawwassen First Nations (Surrey).

Thanh also voiced MAP's horror at the war in Ukraine: the devastation and the millions of refugees the violence has produced. MAP will support its members as they gear up for a response should Ukrainians choose to flee to Canada.

She thanked our funders: the **Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MUNI)** who make MAP's work possible

Thanh also sent a message of solidarity with the people of Ukraine, and their families here in Canada, who we know to be suffering under military action currently, and to all those who would inevitable be refugees and to whom we may provide a new home.

Thanh welcomed participants from 30 **MAP member agencies**.

MAP gratefully acknowledges the funding provided by the BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MUNI)

First time introductions:

- Arman Zamani – working with the Afghan Community through Burnaby Neighbourhood House.
- Katie Loewen – with the Immigration & Refugee Board
- Carlos Sandoval – REACH program for youth at PCRS (Pacific Community Resources society).
- Mssko Wakil (MOSAIC legal resources for Afghan clients)
- Ute Warkentin – New Kinbrace Community Coordinator

All new members were warmly welcomed.

The Agenda was shared, and meeting procedure reviewed.

The Minutes of the January 27 Meeting were adopted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ****IRB Updates – presented by Katie Loewen (IRB)**

Please note these numbers do not reflect arrivals to Canada, they are referrals to the IRB

Dec: 144 principal claimants

January: 98 principal claimants

February to Feb 17: 64

Total: 306 principal claims

Principal claimant numbers by country:

Jan 1 – Feb 17 by country

Iran - 49

India -26

Mexico - 20

Columbia - 9

Afghanistan – 8

Other: 50

TOTAL: 162 claimants

*** These statistics are for your information and are not intended to be shared more widely. If you would like to make a formal request for statistics, kindly contact bridget.bell@irb-cisr.qc.ca with your request.*

- **MAP BCIHC Support Program Startup – Jenny Lam (MAP Co-chair)**

→ We have worked with the Agencies involved and CBSA to prepare for the new program, and we are excited to announce that we will start on a weekly basis on Thursday March 3 from 1-4pm with one hour dedicated to each detainee

MAP gratefully acknowledges the funding provided by the BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MUNI)

- The four agencies involved are: Options, PICS, MOSAIC and Zaytuna, with DIVERSEcity joining a little later. The 3 referral-only agencies are: Kinbrace's Ready Tour, Rainbow Refugee and VAST
- We have provided 4 Orientations to the Settlement Worker Teams and an Orientation to the new Interpreter Pool that has been created (20 volunteer interpreters).
- We have good language coverage, but we are still in need of Punjabi/Hindi interpreters – please contact Jenny Moss for information or with your suggestions.
- Acknowledged the tremendous help and expertise from Jenny Jeanes (Action Refuges Montreal), Prof Efrat Arbel, UBC Law, Molly Joeck and Chris Ghirardi (Immigration lawyers, duty counsel/ IHC Legal Clinic members) and Sara Lopez (VAST)
- We have created an Advisory Committee for the program made up of: Sara Lopez, Efrat Arbel and Chris Ghirardi to provide us with feedback and guidance. Including a debrief on Day 1.
- Options will provide first service next week and special debrief afterwards
- As a new program we will be learning and improving constantly
- We will cover more in April MAP Meeting which will have a Presentation by CBSA and the new program
- New name for program: **MAP BCIHC Support Program** was chosen from a list of suggestions.

- **Rapid test kits available through Red Cross**

Red Cross has offered Rapid test Kits available free for agency staff or clients. There are some conditions associated with receiving the kits. More information available through this link:

<https://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/current-emergency-responses/covid-19-%E2%80%93-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-rapid-testing-program-for-community-organizations>

- **IN FOCUS March 15: 'Finding Home' - Savleen Kaur (Options / MAP Information Working Group)**

Savleen invited MAP members to the upcoming In Focus event on refugee claimant housing
March 15, 7pm

Moderator: Loren Balisky (Kinbrace) Speakers: Mohammed Zaqout (Kinbrace) Vanessa Roth (Journey Home)

Registration: <https://bit.ly/3gUFyhV>

And more information about the speakers and the In Focus series is available on the MAP website at

<https://mapbc.org/finding-home-transformative-places-where-refugee-claimants-flourish/>

Election of new MAP Co-chair 2022 – 2024

Extended the Nomination window for MAP's co-chair to March 18 – to give people the time to consider volunteering as co-chair.

Thanh talked about learning more about collaboration and what that really means: accessible and meaningful. This position has helped her learn how to build collaborations and stay connected, even during COVID. And at this time, even granted there is work to do, but there is also an opportunity to frame what MAP will look like in a post-COVID world.

MAP BC EMERGENCY TASK FORCE – PLAN – Barry Growse, Journey Home Community

The Emergency Task Force is getting close to having a draft plan ready for MAP member consideration.

MAP gratefully acknowledges the funding provided by the BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MUNI)

The first draft of the Emergency Plan will be sent to you on Thursday March 24 early and discussed at the MAP Meeting same day.

We need your input at the meeting and afterwards so that we can submit the plan by March 31st.

We recommend you put aside 2 hours between March 24 and March 28 (deadline for comments) to thoroughly review the Plan and get back to us.

Presentation: "NGOs and Refugee and Immigration Services"

Janet Dench, Executive Director – Canadian Council for Refugees

Thanh mentioned that after last month's IRCC presentation on the new online portal and the discussion around authorized representatives there had been some anxiety. We wanted to hear from those who have been working in this area for many years so we are grateful to CCR for agreeing that their Executive Director, Janet Dench, could address us.

Thanh introduced Janet Dench speaking from Montreal who warmly remembered visiting MAP once before and appreciates the close collaboration between CCR and MAP.

(See Janet's slides attached for presentation content)

Link for Steering Committee application: <https://ccrweb.ca/en/quality-service-steering-committee-application>

QUESTIONS:

- Has IRCC taken any kind of legal action against any organizations?
Response: no, not that we know of. But we did agree that if IRCC is not going to enforce it's a bit pointless to support this law – but with creation of the College that has more powers including enforcement. But colleges unlikely to target NGO's – more likely to be going after unscrupulous consultants of which they have many to deal with in terms of problematic representation.
- At the IRB there is a **Notice of Representation without a Fee** – it recognizes representation by a non-lawyer as long as they are not paid specifically for the transaction. But does this interpretation mean the IRB should not be allowing this if IRCC has decided to prohibit such NGO assistance?
Response: IRB has a different set of legal procedures and they have agreed with our interpretation of IRPA 91. CCR is not sure if the two departments have discussed this discrepancy.
- What is your advice for frontline workers at this time?
Response – it's for every agency to decide but we have heard that the impact of agencies withdrawing from this service means that vulnerable people are either forced to do their own applications and make mistakes, or desperately seek money to pay for consultants at great risk. Many smaller organizations end up picking up the slack and being overwhelmed when larger, more conservative agencies withdraw this service.
Janet hopes that people think about what the principled thing to do is.
- Member commented that we very much appreciate the advocacy work that Janet and the CCR has been doing and you continue to do. This has been most helpful! We look forward to the results of the upcoming project.

MAP gratefully acknowledges the funding provided by the BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MUNI)

- **Mariana Martinez Vieyra (VAST/CCR Inland Protection Committee)**

Reminded everyone about meeting Feb 25 re: Access to IFH

More discussion to listen to

- **Break**

Attendees met in one of 3 breakout rooms:

CCR follow up Discussion

Settlement

Housing

MAP Media Policy Review – Thanh Lam

We invited representatives from Working Groups, Emergency Task Force and MAP Executive to discuss a potential policy to guide us if news media contacts MAP? We realized as a network we should be on the same page.

We looked at various scenarios:

What should happen when media reaches out about a specific MAP project?

OR a more general question?

We want to provide an opportunity for everyone to have their voices heard but we also need to be efficient and responsive in our messaging.

We have a list of best practices from our meeting, and we will send these out to you for your feedback and then vote on the policy at the next meeting.

Agreed.

BC CHARMS Update – Marzieh

Reminder that Jacqueline has left the TEAM and they are in the process of hiring a new coordinator. Marzieh also acknowledged all her contributions and said she will provide updates until a new coordinator is hired.

Report book is published – please send a request for a hard copy to Marzieh at mnezakat@mosaicbc.org

Everyone who helped with the interviews will receive a copy free from BC CHARMS as well.

Refugee Claimant Navigation website – mock-up is ready – very appealing to the eye, simple and visual.

Reviewing with MAP Exec and Advisory Committee to check content.

Website will be launched at end of March – to support refugee claimants in their first few days/weeks here.

Database

Externally testing finished and feedback helped with some changes to simplify the workflow.

Going to start promoting the program and reach out for training.

MOSAIC will request agencies who would like to become a train-the-trainer (CHARMS Champion) and also who would like regular end user training to use the system.

Projected launch date: early May

MAP gratefully acknowledges the funding provided by the BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MUNI)

Sustainability Plan

Consultants have started working on the Sustainability Plan which is very important to make sure that the Project continues beyond the present funding cycle. There will probably be a number of drafts and it is expected that the Sustainability Plan will be finalized in July.

Thanh added:

What is a CHARMS Champion?

Its someone who will make the system clear to others – there will be lots of promotion soon.

Agency Updates concerning refugee claimants shared at the meeting:

Louisa Brett Covenant House) – we have lots of youth RCs in the shelter – we are building a new place and the programs will move into there. Complete transfer to the new building will take place in the summer and they are always open to youth up to age 25 who need shelter and are prepared to work with their programs.

Email: lbrett@covenanthousebc.org

Ali Mustafa (Muslim Foodbank & Aspire Services)

1. Aspire program looking for Arabic and Farsi speaking volunteers to become support workers – 3-day training provided to prepare them.

2. Food hampers and counselling services provided by Muslim Foodbank and are happy to welcome refugee claimants and newcomers to the Muslim Foodbank.

Contact ali@muslimfoodbank.com or call 604 4465259

Savleen (Options) - Online English classes for beginners every Wednesday from Jan 19, 6:00pm - 7:30pm, for anyone with a temporary status including claimants.

These classes are specifically designed for clients with little or no language literacy. Please encourage newcomers to register for the upcoming session tomorrow.

Zoom link - <https://optionsbc.zoom.us/j/95710361640>

Please reach me at 604.809.7618 / savleen.kaur@options.bc.ca

Mariana (VAST) – New and revised Arts in Community Program for claimants and other newcomers – not just painting but movement etc. Materials provided – 6 session-round starting soon. A therapeutic, creativity, community-building space

Please contact via email matias.hacker@vast-vancouver to refer client to Arts in Community program.

Carlos (Reach Program at PCRS) – open for referrals in the REACH program – whose mandate is to support immigrant youth from 13 – 24 – make friends, homework club, volunteer tutors, build a supportive network etc. – drop in - operates in Surrey, Delta, Langley.

csandoval@pcrs.ca

Abeer (REACH Clinic) – the Violence Prevention Support Program for Arabic speaking women fleeing abuse has been running since July 2021 – the supportive group takes place every Wednesday for 2 hours – for survivors and those planning to leave. Also provided in English.

Contact Abeer at ahattab@reachcentre.bc.ca

MAP gratefully acknowledges the funding provided by the BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MUNI)

Masi (Ready Tour) There are Ready Tour sessions every 2 weeks, mostly on Fridays – and RAD sessions once every 3 months – please refer RCs with eligibility to Masi for a session.

masi@kinbrace.ca

Vancouver Youth Choir Kindred Program looking for new recruits. Newcomer Youth invited to join the choir Vancouver Youth Choir Kindred Project. A great way to have fun and connect.

Carrie Tennant (Artistic Director) has provided these links:

Here is the website link to register: <https://vancouveryouthchoir.com/choirs/vyckindred/>

Here is the direct link to the registration

form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeI0Mohuh4ZKTmM8rW0cyF9gg6Le-tZXy6f4ibICFk22NNNWA/viewform>

The PDF Flyer link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fUNGPYkfalzX8l81rHlz--PTbrHEcK8K/view?usp=sharing>

Link to the mini-documentary:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIT1v8gN76k&t=1s>

Here is a link to a little promo video:

https://www.instagram.com/p/CZMzXK-tP9I/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

More info? Contact Carrie at carrie@vancouveryouthchoir.com

Suggestion: Invite IRCC back again to hear more about the new Portal and ask more questions.

Agreed to invite – IRCC are editing it and so they should be ready to present again.

Mariana mentioned she really enjoyed the Update session – Thanh remarked we will try and be back in person soon

Question: will World Refugee Day be back in person this year?

Jenny has been in contact with VPL, and they are considering – if not maybe we can host something outside.

Feedback Poll – 100% response for almost every aspect of the meeting today.

Adjournment – Next meeting: March 24, 2022

MAP gratefully acknowledges the funding provided by the BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MUNI)