

MAP Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 24, 2021 - 9:30AM – 12:00 PM

Attendees: Jenny Lam (Options), Thanh Lam (MPNH), Xania Labreche (IRB), Brad Kinnie (JHC), Vanessa Roth (JHC), Barry Growe (JHC), Claire Rowlands (IRCC), Mssko Wakil (MOSAIC), Lucia Hernandez (MOSAIC), Frishta Hassani (MOSAIC), Maria Vergara (MOSAIC), Jaswinder Sandhu (PICS), Geeta Bhardwaj (Archway CS), Monika Izaak (Archway CS), Wen Ren (LMNH), Masha Rademakers (Impact North Shore), Alex Kang (MUNI), Joni Rose (MUNI), Louisa Brett (Covenant House), Khalil Al Zahran (Rainbow Refugee), Paige Levirs (MSDPR), Kelly Rader (Inasmuch), Sarah Mills (Inasmuch), Loren Balisky (Kinbrace), Derek Chu (Kinbrace), Wilfred Thariki (Kinbrace), Mohammed Zaqout (Kinbrace), Fran Gallo (Kinbrace), Masi Allahverdi (Ready Tour), Sadiq Mohabi (SOS-ISSofBC), Sara Lopez (VAST), Sireen El-Nashar (Zaytuna), Ali Mustafa (Muslim Food Bank), Richard Soo (ECC), Arman Zamani (Burnaby NH), Jenny Moss (MAP)

Guests: Mona Hassania (NIA Counselling)

Regrets: Ann Ball (New Hope), Mahi Khalaf (SOS-ISSofBC), Julia Wu (bc211), Ana Maria Bustamente (Burnaby Family Life/BLIP)

Welcome from Co-Chair: Jenny Lam.

Jenny acknowledged and thanked the hənqəminəm̓ (**HUNKAMEENAM**) and Skwxwú7mesh (**SQUAMISH**) peoples from whose unceded lands she was hosting the meeting.

Jenny also **acknowledged the generous funding from Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MUNI)** that makes MAP's work possible.

Jenny welcomed participants from **23 MAP member agencies**.

First time introductions:

- **Frishta Hassani** – introduced herself from MOSAIC's new SAFE project for victims of trafficking.

Jenny covered meeting protocol including muting, chat box use, the meeting is recorded for Minute taking.

The **Agenda** was outlined. This month two breakout rooms were randomly divided to promote more discussion about the Emergency Plan.

Agency Updates were added to the CHAT and distributed later the same day.

The **February 24, 2021, meeting Minutes** were approved with the addition of this statement from IRB: *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.gc.ca with your request.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **IRB Update – Xania Labreche (IRB-RPD)**

April 1, 2021 – March 14, 2022 (fiscal year cycle)

1339 principal referrals (1998 total referrals including associates)

For the past 3 months:

Jan - 98 principal claims – 148 including associate referrals

Feb – 103 – 141

Until March (14) 73 – 98

TOTAL: 274 principal claims – 387 with associate claims

Main Countries of Referral in last fiscal year:

Iran – 413 principal claims

India – 321

Mexico – 122

Afghanistan - 58

China – 53

Columbia - 35

Turkey – 22

Other – 315

There were no questions for the IRB.

Jenny thanked Xania for the update

Please note: *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.gc.ca with your request.*

- **Update from Ministry of Municipal Affairs regarding Housing Funding – Joni Rose**

Regarding the IHAP funding that was earmarked for refugee claimant housing

The Ministry issued a call in June 2021 for proposals for housing renovations – there were no responses.

New strategy needed – so MUNI began working with housing policy experts at the Ministry of the Attorney General and BC Housing to learn from their expertise and look for options for remaining IHAP funds.

Decided that BC Housing will be the government lead responsible for determining best use of the funds and develop long term housing for refugee claimants.

MUNI will not be involved anymore in funding housing projects, including JHC's Meanwhile Spaces project.

But MUNI will continue to be included in policy discussions regarding housing as related to the provision of services to this population and will always be there to amplify MAP members' voices.

No questions

Jenny thanked Joni Rose

- **Election of new MAP Co-chair 2022 – 2024**

MAP has not received any nominations for the co-chair position, but it is essential to find someone soon as

Jenny steps down in June and new co-chair starts in September

Jenny and Thanh reminded everyone how important this role is and that as a collaborative network all partner agencies carry the responsibility for taking turns to co-chair.

Jenny asked the meeting participants for any nominations from the floor or questions about the position?

Question/comments

Vanessa (JHC): Is there a co-chair job description?: Jenny Moss directed members to the MAP Terms of Reference:

Executive

1. MAP recognizes that its Members carry many responsibilities. In the interest of sharing responsibilities, representatives of Partner agencies are encouraged and expected to serve on the Executive on a rotating basis.
2. For the purposes of stewardship, MAP will nominate and elect Partners to the following positions for a 2-year alternating term to ensure crossover and coaching. Under special circumstances, and following a member vote of support, may be extended for a period up to a maximum of 2 years.

The co-chairs, working with the Executive Coordinator, are responsible for the following:

- identify guest speakers
- set the agenda
- chair MAP meetings whether online or in person.
- co-chair Advisory Committees
- lead on MAP collaborations, events and partnerships.
- represent MAP in dialogue with other organizations including government.

Loren (Kinbrace): He has co-chaired before. Noted this is the first time MAP has struggled to find a co-chair even though the MAP Executive has provided members with many opportunities to volunteer. Perhaps it's worth taking a couple of months to look at the issue and work out what's happening?

Louisa (Covenant House) Possibly due to the upheavals caused by the pandemic and the massive staff turnover happening everywhere?

Thanh agreed – it is challenging to think of taking on something new at this unstable time.

Fran mentioned that MAP is involved in more projects now than it was at the beginning. This means more responsibility for co-chairs perhaps.

Brad (Journey Home Community) commented that there are generally capacity issues in the sector for small agencies who are trying to do their best. Brad offered to be part of a group to reflect on MAP capacity and structure.

Thanh & Jenny– shall we accept the idea to think about it and leave the question of nominations for now in order to take some time to analyse? **Please contact Thanh, Jenny or MAP at info@mapbc.org if you would like to participate or you have any other feedback.**

Loren thanked **MAP Executive** and valued the work and process being done.

Loren willing to participate in the process

Brad will nominate someone to rep **JHC** to this group

Presentation: MAP Emergency Plan

Jenny Lam introduced the 2 speakers: **Thanh Lam (MAP Co-chair) and Mona Hassania (Plan writer)**

Mona Hassannia is a Registered Clinical Counsellor (RCC) and founder of Nia Counselling providing counselling and mental health workshops to front-line staff and clients in the settlement sector. She has over 15 years of front-line and management experience in working with various populations including government-assisted refugees (GARs), refugee claimants, migrants, and immigrants. She served as the manager of Settlement Orientation Services (SOS), a program serving only refugee claimants, and is well-informed on the mental health needs and challenges of those with precarious immigration status. Her continued work within the sector focuses on various mental health projects and initiatives geared towards supporting the capacity building of frontline staff and the organizations that serve them.

Mona greeted MAP participants and noted that the Plan was circulated before the meeting (and attached) to follow along with.

Please see the slides shared by Mona attached

Thanh invited a participatory approach and noted they will present together in tandem.

Thanh reviewed the Agenda

Special note: This is not a proscriptive plan – the idea is to work in collaboration based on member recommendations to provide support should the strain on the sector become urgent, considering each agency's own expertise, plans and processes.

The plan was envisaged following the start of the pandemic and a halt in refugee claimants arriving into Canada. There was concern that once the pandemic finished there would be large arrivals of claimants thereafter. This has not materialized to date, but we also realized how valuable a Plan would be in all sorts of contexts.

Thanh covered the history of developing a plan: **presentations to MAP in 2021**, the **survey**, and **report** by Richard Belcham that summarized details of the survey and laid the foundation for the Plan.

- Created an **Emergency Task Force** to turn the Report into a Plan:
Chair: Barry Growse (Journey Home community)
Members: Mahi Khalaf (SOS-ISSofBC)
Sara Lopez (VAST)
Joni Rose (Ministry of Municipal Affairs)
Thanh Lam & Jenny Moss (MAP Executive)
- The Plan is a Guiding Roadmap to help those of us involved in supporting refugee claimants. Mona Hassania responded successfully for a call out for a Writer, and we spent the last 3 months designing and re-drafting the plan.
- The plan reflects the diversity of race, ethnicity and gender in order to align with the realities of the people we serve and MAP's vision and mission. The plan recognizes the expertise of Member agencies in all these areas.

- **MAP's ROLE**

To be a convener and a facilitator – to support with information, inter-agency communication and fostering collaboration via a Plan that will enable us to be nimbler and more efficient in a response.

- **ROLE OF AGENCIES**

Plan looks at role of agencies to become **lead agency** (because of **expertise**) acting on behalf of all MAP in a specific area – to secure additional resources/funds

Also there could be **co-lead agencies** – in order to share the work

There will be a call-out for lead agencies.

Not to say that agencies won't have their own emergency plans and preparedness – the plan will prompt agencies to work a little more on their preparedness and to assign roles internally for an emergency. The plan also adds to and supports incorporating agency plans into a major plan.

- **GOAL OF PLAN:**

Many may think we are already in an emergency – and we agree that is true!

The plan will help agencies navigate an emergency situation and speaks to recommendations to ease the processes during an emergency – like a roadmap.

- Recommends principles and methods to address agency capacity to respond

- Provides possible recommendations to government both before and during an emergency.

- looks beyond the pandemic to address any scenario

Deliberately simple so it is easy to implement

The plan addresses **13 key services** provided to refugee claimants – each one looks at:

MAP and Lead Agency Roles

Recommendations to MAP, Agencies & Government

And in each section it is further divided into **preparedness** and **response sections**.

NOTE: The MAP Emergency Task Force will remain in place to work on preparedness, and support in an emergency.

EMERGENCY TRIGGER POINTS

How do we decide when we are in an emergency?

We have used the report's 'double the number' of claimants pre-covid, with majority arriving in first 6 months.

Described in 3 steps:

- Step 1: 90% capacity – looking at indicators such as housing/municipal shelters are at 100%
- Step 2: self-assessed in terms of agencies looking at client wait times/worker care alarms
- Step 3 – government will be notified, and the Coordination Officer will be appointed – please look at these two necessary paid positions.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Because refugee claimants need some services immediately, but others, in an emergency, will need to wait, they have been divided into:

First Priorities (9) Coordination, Communication, Food, Housing, Translation & Interpretation, Transportation, General Health, Mental Health, Worker Care

Second priorities (4) Settlement & Orientation, Donations, Legal support, Technology.
The report covers all these in detail, and we look to your feedback for any improvements.

EXERCISING THE PLAN

The plan is a living document – something that can be reviewed and exercised every 3 years – probably a half day exercise to go through it, discuss it and make sure it works, go through it, and see if it is still relevant and works

Thanh shared the actual plan – please respond to the plan as requested
(plan is attached to these Minutes)

Showed how plan is divided up in sections including appendices and recommendations.

In discussion we need to see how this intersects with your expertise and agency reality. Perhaps focus on the part of the Plan that seems most relevant to you and your agency? – e.g., could set up a workshop for your staff or create a worker care model.

Participants divided into 2 breakout groups for further discussion which was presented in the feedback:

Reporting from the group conversations

- People needed more information about the **trigger points** and mentioned:
How helpful is a numerical trigger point really?
Is there a way to capture a qualitative assessment of a trigger point from SWO managing caseloads?
- How do we see trigger points beyond housing? Can we define triggers in other areas of need also?
- In another sense numerical points are not that useful – see the example of the Tamil Arrivals in 2010. There were smaller numbers, but they had very immediate needs that were challenging for agencies in response. It was the suddenness all at once that created an emergency. There can be different pressures when numbers arrive at the same time – or when spread out.
- Also mentioned the **role of civil society** – role of community who want to volunteer - as is happening currently with the response to Ukrainians who are displaced. People may want to open their homes for refugee claimants but there needs to be a way of referring them and also vetting the accommodation.
Suggested: this is an action item to include community, not just settlement sector.
- It was mentioned that those who are not currently helping claimants - but could help in this area too when capacity is low.
- It was mentioned that we must strongly emphasize the need for collaboration.
- Also, there will be pressure points for other areas: health/financial – there will be delays in processing when there are increases in numbers. How do we address delays?
- Need for monitoring and evaluation of the plan – a process of reflection for later on.

- Can we prioritize services within the first priorities?

Thanh invited anymore comments and Mona mentioned that feedback should be returned by Tuesday March 29 at 5pm so that Mona and the Task Force can finalize by March 31.

Question:

Loren (Kinbrace): what is the process for the lead agency role? Good idea but how?

Is there an idea of how to identify a lead agency?

The Task Force recommended there would be a call-out for lead agencies – certainly not proscriptive or volunteering anyone, but it will be followed up with.

MAP Media Guidelines Review – Thanh Lam

Thanh described the issue – how should MAP respond when someone reaches out to MAP from the media with a question?

Following the issue, MAP Executive met with the chairs of the two Working Groups and the Emergency Task Force and MAP BCIHC Support Program to discuss and form a plan.

Thanh shared the guidelines verbally:

MAP Media Guidelines

1. If the media contacts MAP for information on MAP itself and what we do, we will redirect media request to our MAP co-chairs to speak about MAP's mandate and vision.

2. If the media contacts MAP to comment on a broad refugee claimant issue, the media request opportunity will be forwarded to member agencies to follow up. If there is no member agency response, then the MAP Executive can respond to the media request from our mandate's point of view.

3. If the media contacts MAP to comment on a specific project or a specific issue pertaining to refugee claimants, MAP would forward the opportunity to the appropriate working groups or agencies specializing in the subject area. Member agencies are asked to consider providing names of people who would like to speak to specific issues.

As the experts please let us know if you would like to be spokesperson on a particular issue

Please provide feedback if you have any to the MAP Executive – the Guidelines will be posted to the website Member's Only section and implemented immediately.

NO BC CHARMS Update this month.

AGENCY UPDATES VERBALLY (updates from the CHAT below)

Loren (Kinbrace) the Research project: 'From Humanitarian to Human: Changing the Way We Welcome Refugee Claimants.' Please share widely: <https://kinbrace.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Report-From-Humanitarian-to-Human-Changing-the-Way-We-Welcome-Refugee-Claimants-2021.pdf>

We will discuss uploading this to MAP website.

Khalil (Rainbow Refugee) – Has moved to 103 - 1033 Davie Street. New home!

Refugee claimants who identify as LGBTQ+ may visit without an appointment on Tuesdays between 12:30 – 4:30 They can also call 6043392719 or email inland@rainbowrefugee.ca

QUESTION: Richard Soo (Eastern Catholic Church)– asked about Ukrainian refugees and who can help them? They are beyond MAP's mandate, so the question is to have guidance about who to turn to for assistance when it is needed.

RESPONSES:

Louise (Covenant House) We will take them in if we have spaces available.

Jenny / Thanh responded that since Ukrainians arriving do not come as refugee claimants, but have separate pathways, MAP at this point is not involved.

Richard mentioned that his church is rooted in Ukraine. Many want to go back and so making a claim not appropriate as they could not return.

Loren (Kinbrace) Richard's question is very important – those of us supporting refugee claimants and their very specific process please let us use clear language regarding refugees. Please use phrases like 'displaced Ukrainians or 'asylum seekers' rather than refugees. See: <https://kinbrace.ca/use-the-right-language-displaced-ukrainians-not-ukrainian-refugees/>

MOSAIC SAFE project

MOSAIC has recently received funding through Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) to undertake a project developing promising practices to prevent exploitation and trafficking in newcomer communities and provide supports to those who have been exploited or trafficked.

The project, **Safeguarding and Facilitating Empowerment (SAFE)**, will create educational resources and learning opportunities for at risk populations and develop a case management system for survivors of exploitation. There will be ongoing evaluation and adaptation to best address the needs and gaps of this population, with the goal of enhancing the overall capacity of the settlement sector to prevent and address exploitation, with trafficking as an extreme. Promising practices that emerge from this project will be made available to settlement service providers through trainings and materials.

We are conducting a needs assessment and would appreciate feedback on your agency's current capacity to address exploitation and trafficking (both prevention and intervention). If your agency is on the larger side and has many programs that do not overlap in clientele, please forward this survey to all relevant staff. If you could respond to this survey by Thursday March 31st, 2022, we would greatly appreciate it.

SURVEY LINK: <https://forms.office.com/r/TVJJB59TjT>

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

Adjourned a little early.

Next Meeting: Thursday April 28, 2022, online. Meet in person: 50%