

MAP Meeting Minutes

Thursday, JUNE 23, 2022 - 9:30AM – 12:00 PM

Attendees: Thanh Lam (MPNH), Jenny Lam (Options), Iris Solorzano (Options), Patricia Castillo (Options), Gina Hong (Options), Jordan Bryan (IRB), Brad Kinnie (JHC), Vanessa Roth (JHC), Barry Growe (JHC), Azadeh Tamjeedi (UNHCR), Chantelle MacIsaac (MOSAIC), Liam McQuillan (MOSAIC), Marzieh Nezakat (MOSAIC), Salih Arif (MOSAIC), Devinder Chattha (PICS), Jaswinder Sandhu (PICS), Geeta Bhardwaj (Archway CS), Monika Izaak (Archway CS), Joni Rose (MUNI), Paige Levirs (MSDPR), Wazhma Wakil (Umbrella MHC), Adrienne Bale (DIVERSEcity), Kathleen Cashin (Covenant House), Sara Lopez (VAST), Kelly Rader (Inasmuch), Loren Balisky (Kinbrace), Derek Chu (Kinbrace), Mohammed Zaqout (Kinbrace), Luke Greidenhaus (Kinbrace), Ann Barnard Ball (New Hope), Sadiq Mohabi (SOS-ISSofBC), Mohsen Eslami (SOS-ISSofBC), Mina Khodabakhshi (ISSofBC), Dina Ganon (ISSofBC), Sireen El-Nashar (Zaytuna), Saleem Spindari (Muslim Food Bank), Richard Soo (ECC), Lizeth Escobedo (YMCA), Jenny Moss (MAP)

Special Guests: Sharan Johal (IRCC), Basel Dakak (CCR)

Welcome from Co-Chair: Thanh Lam.

Thanh acknowledged and thanked the x̱m̱əθkwəy̱əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations peoples (Vancouver) for their hospitality.

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

Thanh read part of the article published in the Globe & Mail (June 17) titled: **B.C. developer freeing up empty rental units for refugees** about the work of **Journey Home Community** and the Meanwhile Spaces project. The full article can be read [here](#).

Journey Home were congratulated on such an innovative and successful project that will add much needed housing for refugee claimants.

Thanh welcomed participants from **27 MAP member agencies**.

First time introductions:

- Lisa Escobedo – YMCA Vancouver – she is responsible for Adult Training and Immigrant Services
- Chantelle MacIsaac - MOSAIC Manager of Quality Assurance – she also works with today's presenter on the CCR Quality of Services Project.
- Mina Khodabakhshi – new Settlement Worker for SOS-ISSofBC – noted that the meeting is very useful.

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

The **Agenda** was outlined.

Three breakout rooms were pre-assigned: IRCC Portal, CCR Quality of services Project and Housing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **IRB Update – Jordan Bryan (IRB-RPD)**

820 principal claimants so far in 2022 (1263 total claimants – includes family members)

150 so far in June.

Principal source countries:

Iran

India

Mexico

Colombia

China

They account for 600 of the 800 principal claimants received so far this year.

There is an increasing onsite presence at the office and the IRB continue to be flexible as to how hearings will be held. Virtual hearings are the primary format, but anyone with a preference for an in-person hearing can request.

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 the IRB with your request.*

- **World Refugee Day 2022 Report – A New Belonging: Thanh Lam**

We had 3 live events this year and photographs were shared.

- **June 15: Vancouver Public Library sponsored event: Five ‘Shoe Project’** refugee women told their stories to a gathering of 100 people. The stories were from Iran, Eritrea, Syria and Russia and were accompanied by acoustic music on the santoor performed by Saeid Kooshki.

The Shoe project provides training in writing and performing to newcomer women. See:

<https://theshoeproject.online/>

Thanks to the Vancouver Library for their support and sponsorship, to the speakers and volunteers. A video will be available of this event soon.

- **June 20: World Refugee Day Vancouver**

Organized by MAP with the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver LIP and hosted at Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House from 12pm – 2pm there were roughly 100 attendees.

Cozy, charming space with plenty of opportunities to educate the public and Vancouver City Council representatives about the resilience and contributions of refugees.

Thanks to Ellen Vaillancourt (COV) and her staff, Nova Chamberlin and Koyali Burman (Vancouver LIP), Amina Osman (Jumpstart Refugee Talent) who emceed with Thanh. Thanks to Huda Abdelhamid of Super Dishes for the delicious catering, music from Ibrahim and Anas and to MPNH Executive director Tulia

Castellanos for supporting this successful event. A video will be available of this event soon

-June 20: World Refugee Day Surrey – Jenny Lam

Organized by MAP in collaboration with the DIVERSEcity-based Surrey LIP and major contributions from local agencies: PICS, Zaytuna CS, MOSAIC and Options who met regularly to organize the event.

Emceed by Lenya Wilks from Surrey LIP we enjoyed speakers from Surrey City Council, the RCMP as well as Sherman Chan from MOSAIC, Jenny Lam representing MAP, and keynote Saleem Spindari from Aspire/Muslim Food Bank.

The program included folk dancing, 3 diverse speakers as well as delicious food donated by PICS, huge door prizes donated by Sireen from Zaytuna CS and a wonderful rap song to close from Cru Alexander Timi.

We are grateful to all the volunteers and especially Michaela who returned again this year to help out. The event was attended by over 100 including many new refugees who felt the warm welcome.

- **Open Discussion with IRCC: MAP member agency experience with the portal**

Sharan Johal: Assistant Supervisor, Domestic Network, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

Sharan attended to provide tips and answer questions about experience with the IRCC portal.

Thanh welcomed Sharan and introduced her work at the Domestic Network Unit that processes inland refugee applications in BC. She has worked in refugee processing with IRCC for 4 years in various positions.

Thanh provided the background of concerns and issues with the portal experienced by MAP members at meetings and via email.

Sharan: Thanked MAP for the opportunity to address the portal and any issues. She emphasized that she is not a technical expert so she will take any issues back to the IT specialists and relay answers after the meeting.

Information & Tips:

- **If you are a refugee claimant** and you have issues you can go online to the **Help Center** – which will provide a response within 10 business days for technical support issues:
<https://ircc.canada.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=1551&top=20>
- You can also reach the **Client Support Centre by calling 1-888-242-2100 (in Canada only)**
- **If you are an immigration representative: -**
 - a) Who is unsure how to assist your client, please visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/claim-protection-inside-canada/apply.html>
Scroll to “If you’re working with a representative section”
Click “Make sure you know what a representative can do for you”-
 - b) Who is having difficulty using the Canadian Refugee Protection Portal, please refer to the Help Centre question and answer:
<https://ircc.canada.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?qnum=1551&top=20> or contact the Client Support Centre by calling 1-888-242-2100 (in Canada only)

IRCC was aware of May 27 – 31 portal crash – in Vancouver clients were contacted via other ways to tell them about appointments.

- If you continue to have problems please clear your cache and use only this URL: <https://portal-portail.crp-cpr.apps.cic.gc.ca/>.
- Directly enter link each time – don't save it as a favorite but go via IRCC website
- Browsers: Preferably use: Google Chrome, Firefox, Microsoft Edge, **NOT** Internet Explorer.
- **Fraud detection issue** – in November this caused some problems but has been attended to.
- Clients have the option to make their claim **via paper if they are in Canada** –this can be used for disabilities or computer access issues. You can request an exemption and they are usually granted. Here is information about how to apply for an exemption: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/claim-protection-inside-canada/apply-paper.html>

Your application should be sent to:

IRCC.RefugeePortalExemption-ExemptionPortailRefugies.IRCC@cic.gc.ca

You then bring your application in person to the office when you are given an appointment.

- The Portal was designed so you cannot proceed until you complete each section: so please have all the information you need for each section as you can't go back. You won't be able to move forward if mandatory information is missed.
- Entering exact dates: if you don't remember an exact date clients should approximate to closest date remembered. (often applies to work history)
- Be careful with work history not to leave gaps – the portal asks for work history for last 10 years or since age 18. If person is only 20 then obviously don't need anything before 18.
- Should adult children make separate portal applications or apply with their parents?
If under 22 – apply with parents, if over 22 – separate application.
But if you are over 22 please mention you have family members making a simultaneous claim – in the specific section for notes.

QUESTIONS:

Richard (Eastern Catholic Church): Suggestion: when entering dates you should enter them backwards – work backwards from present date with the work history.

It does not work in all cases though – and instructions should be clearer as some of the instructions are not comprehensible – Sharan will pass this message on.

You can always provide feedback via the central email: CIC-VancouverTRRU@cic.gc.ca

Iris (Options) – processing times – what is the likely wait time for an interview once claim is submitted?

Response: trying to do best to schedule clients asap – pandemic affected but now trying to ramp up.

Cannot provide a definitive answer to this question though.

Loren (Kinbrace): is the portal stable now – i.e., will there be more questions?

Response: not heard of any more questions to be added.

Sadiq (SOS): Where and to whom should we address other issues for IRCC like: work permit delay/GCKey, repeated correspondences/notices, confusing emails etc? There are many issues that need an overview/crosscheck by IRCC.

Response: Always contact the Call Centre – early morning is the best time to get through. And the Help Centre too.

Additionally, you can send questions via this email centrally: CIC-VancouverTRRU@cic.gc.ca or via Jenny to Sharan, though she cannot answer all of them.

Patricia (Options): due to big influxes and lawyers being assigned late – can clients go to interview later when they have a lawyer?

Response: you can make a request for exemption from the portal, but we cannot create an interview without an application.

- **Presentation: Canadian Council for Refugees Quality of Services Project**
Presented by Basel Dakak, Quality of Service Project Coordinator

SLIDES are attached to support the presentation

Thanh welcomed Basel Dakak and provided an introduction.

This is a continuation of the presentation Janet Dench, ED of CCR provided in February 2022 to MAP that included a reason for the project and introductory information. We will be updating MAP on our progress from now on.

A need for the Quality of Service project came out of discussions in 2018/2019 with IRCC where CCR highlighted the ambiguities in Section 91 in the IRPA.

CCR worked and collaborated with many organizations across Canada and the process culminated in a fairly short set of policies and practices that organizations could use to assist their processes.

The project addresses immigration and refugee processes only

GOAL is to create a set of best practices and customizable policies that NGO's can put in place to improve their services that intersect with immigration law.

AREAS OF ACTIVITY

- Identified policies and practices in place at various agencies – what works and what doesn't.
- Developed best practices and policies – what really works was discussed extensively.

AGREED UPON FRAMEWORK:

4 important pillars of the new framework:

- Ethical Principles
- Scope of Services
- Relevant knowledge and Skills
- Monitoring & Evaluation

Looking to be very relevant to agency needs and priorities.

4 Important Needs and Priorities Commonly Highlighted within the above framework:

- Staff training and knowledge sharing
- Complaints and Feedback policies
- Better Referral Management System in situations requiring more legal involvement
- Checklist of Ethical Principles and Policies (see Slide for details)

Why is CCR reaching out now?

We want conversations about what is working and what challenges you have.

- For 1:1 conversations – contact Basel
- If there are opportunities at your organizations to present this project
- Smaller groups regarding specific areas of focus

- Some groups want to partner with CCR on this – to benefit from expertise from CCR office and the broad discussion
- Partner with CCR to develop policies in relation to Immigration and Refugee policies –
OR examine your policies at this point that relate to refugee policies.

Basel can be reached at: bdakak@ccrweb.ca

Chantelle (MOSAIC) – she joined the Steering Committee at CCR and really appreciates the work CCR and Janet are doing, which has also been helpful to MOSAIC.

Discussed issues like:

- Doing an application FOR a client vs WITH a client
- Providing information and not advice
- Importance of maintaining the voice and meaning of the refugee's story by not fixing spelling/grammar
- Currently we are seeing lots of issues emerging, e.g. changes in immigration pathways, boundaries on what we can/cannot do, increased demand - and there is never enough legal support – so this project of CCR is really valuable.

Chantelle encouraged people to contact Basel and share ideas and agency needs as MOSAIC has.

Thanh (MPNH) – trainings on boundaries are very useful so this is very attractive

QUESTIONS:

Adrienne (DIVERSEcity) – Is this Project focused on stream A, or could it include others too?

Response: Focused on immigration and refugee services only

But based on the organizations' work and processes.

BREAK: Members met in following breakout rooms for informal discussion: **IRCC Portal, CCR Quality of Services Project and Housing**

- **Report back on MAP Strategy Meeting – what comes next? - Thanh Lam**

SEE 3 SLIDES ATTACHED

We are in this period of reflection and evaluation regarding MAP's co-chair needs.

Thanks to Brad and Loren for facilitating 2 meetings about the need to support MAP and we discussed them last month at MAP. Right now, we need to recognize:

- *Immediate timeframe – Jenny Lam leaving as of this meeting*
- *Later timeframe – future strategy planning*

Thanks to everyone's ideas and input. Based on feedback and conversations from meetings with MAP members so far, Thanh has created a call for action – to address the immediate and urgent needs of MAP including support to her as sole co-chair:

- For now, we will stick with the 2 co-chair positions but bring others in to assist as needed
- Promise not to take on any more work – we are at our limit, but we need to maintain our commitment to existing projects. One of those commitments is the monthly meetings which are important to staying connected with each other and on issues. Thanh really needs another person to share this responsibility on facilitating and supporting the monthly MAP meetings.

REQUESTS TO MAP MEMBERS:

- 1) **A call out for a Co-Chair** whose main responsibility is to co-organize and co-facilitate MAP monthly meetings – 10 hours a month as each MAP monthly meeting is roughly 3 hours. The remaining hours would be to check in regarding the content, structure, facilitation and logistics of the meeting.
- 2) **A call out for members to join working groups.** We have strong **working groups where some decisions can be made** which you can join:
 - Housing Working Group
 - BC CHARMS Advisory Council
 - MAP BC IHC Team / Advisory Committee
 - Emergency Task Force
 - Information Working Group
- 3) **A call out to help create a decision-making framework to assist MAP co-chairs with decision-making.**
 - a) Where should different types of **decisions** be made and by whom? – the co-chairs do not want to make all the decisions as they impact the wider MAP community, and yet timely and effective decision-making is part of MAP's work – we intend to use the RACI matrix that was employed when MAP designed the CHARMS project to help with decision making.
 - b) Consider helping out by joining to be an **Advisory Member** to help the Co-Chairs make decisions for example about partnership/collaboration requests
This Advisory would meet online on an 'as needed' basis for short periods – perhaps twice/month.

DISCUSSION

Thanh emphasized that the priority right now is to find a new co-chair. It is an unpaid volunteer position but the time involved is quite limited (10 hours/month)

Vanessa (JHC) – Thanked Thanh for the outline of ways that members can help – will this be made into job descriptions and other documents that can be shared?

Response: Yes – we will provide these as soon as possible

Iris (Options) – Reminded Thanh that she would not be alone – Options and other agencies will always be in support. But will find the opportunities to support.

Derek (Kinbrace) – are you looking for someone just to do the meeting role or is it all 3 roles?

Response: We have separated out the co-chair roles into the 3 roles so volunteers can join as
a) co-chair for meetings, b) working group member c) decision making advisory council member
New co-chair (and Thanh) would not attend the working group meetings.

We need help with decision making by using the Advisors who would assist co-chairs or refer decisions to larger MAP membership.

Thanh reminded everyone we are exploring new ways of managing and supporting MAP, so if it is unclear, it's because it is an ongoing discussion – but we hope to clarify soon through documentation.

Jenny Lam – the 3 meetings helped to point out how we can share the responsibility – Right now, MAP needs a new co-chair at 10 hours/month.
Working Groups are attractive to experts in various areas.

Mohsen (SOS) – how many advisors are needed? And would there be a sub-advisory committee to work on issues like housing outreach to other groups, Strategic Plan etc.?

Response: The Strategic Planning will begin in the Fall.

It is not yet clear how many advisory people we need. Even if it's a small group of 3 to help with decisions that would be helpful for now.

The issue is transparency of decision-making and the weight of the decisions, rather than the time involved that is important.

Derek – suggested it would be clearer to say MAP is recruiting a Meeting facilitator rather than calling the position a co-chair who must (by definition) have more responsibility.

Response: Thanh agreed – good idea.

Loren (Kinbrace) – the question is What is the Leadership Structure? That is not very clear – we need to articulate what is the Advisory? Is it like a Board? Are the co-chairs meeting facilitators? Is the Executive Coordinator like the gopher? None of this is very clear right now and needs to be articulated through these documents.

Response: Appreciation for Loren's assistance to date and acknowledgement that the discussion is difficult, and we are not at a conclusion. Main aim is to take the decision making off the shoulders of the co-chairs by creating Advisory Counsel who can assist with where these decisions need to be made.

Brad – This is a conversation in process – not the end – it is a statement of intention to reduce the load on the co-chair out of necessity. and that in the Fall we absolutely need a Strategic Planning mechanism to create a new workable, permanent structure. But the intention is to lower the weight on the co-chair to make the position do-able.

Response: Agreed – we have a temporary solution for now, but the Strategic Planning is definitely needed.

Derek: Would a new co-chair be compelled to commit to a new structure – as it might shift?

Response: Yes, we would hope that anyone who steps forward would be prepared to work with whatever new structure is adopted by MAP.

BC CHARMS Update - Liam McQuillan (MOSAIC)

Phase 1: Launch and User Recruitment

Since May 16 launch there have been 10 users onboarded and another 5/6 ready to add.

Training materials further developed, and a master PDF developed to send out to everyone

Trainings are being scheduled – watch for emails with information

There will be a finite date for users to upload their info into CHARMS and we will have a good system of monitoring data up until that date.

Now all testing is completed BC CHARMS is moving into:

Phase 2: Settlement Sector

Engaging with bc211 to be involved in their systems and an external referral form has been developed with bc211 and other 'external' agencies.

Liam is speaking with other agencies when possible and onboarding more. He will also be devoting time to supporting and problem-solving for those agencies already using the system.

Phase 3: Non-Profit and Private Sector

Exposure to Landlord BC, BCNPHA via webinars and workshops

Phase 4: incorporate Private landlords – work with agencies to funnel private landlords to make sure these are safe and reliable housing providers

Phase 5 –Self-referral to BC CHARMS – through promoting them with CBSA/Immigration Services/Churches/Schools/ they will be able to use a self-referral form or the external referral form. There will also be the opportunity for refugee claimants to link via the new **Help (Navigation) Website**. Navigation website is in the process of final approvals and will be launched soon.

CHARMS will also put a link to BC CHARMS via the MAP website too.

There has been very valuable feedback so far that has allowed for some minor tweaks – thank you.

QUESTIONS:

Vanessa (JHC) will refugee claimants be able to self-refer?

YES – in one of the later phases the goal is to allow refugee claimants to provide them with a space in the waiting room where a settlement worker will connect with them - not sure when this will be started but it is definitely on the agenda.

More questions? Please contact Liam at lmcquillan@mosaicbc.org

AGENCY UPDATES

Ready Tours: dates: July 29 from 9:30 - 11:30

To refer a claimant please email: ready@refugeeclaim.ca or masi@kinbrace.ca

Interpretation can be provided to anyone who requires it.

A Sad Farewell to Jenny Lam Co-chair MAP

Speeches: Iris Solorzano (Options) remarked on Jenny's eagerness to learn about claimants and ways to help. Her leadership and professionalism much appreciated.

Always reaching out to find donations and services for claimants

Jenny has been a pivotal part of getting programs for detainees at the IHC started, supporting World Refugee Day and MAP social occasions.

We will miss Jenny chairing the meetings

Jenny Lam thanked Iris for her kind words and MAP for the opportunity to learn so much about refugee claimants

Jenny Moss thanked Jenny Lam for her leadership on the MAP BCIHC Support Program and her wisdom and diplomacy through the negotiations and planning. We will miss your humour as well as your diligence and constant support.

Thanh then shared beautiful messages from many MAP members to Jenny (see slides)

Jenny Lam thanked everyone for their wishes and their support, and she looks forward to joining the Advisory Counsel to continue involvement with MAP BC.

A poll was conducted to gather member feedback.

CLOSING: There will be no meetings in July/August – next meeting September 22. Enjoy your summer!