



MAP Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 26, 2021 - 9:30AM – 12:00 PM

Attendees: Jenny Lam (Options), Iris Solorzano (Options), Patricia Castillo (Options), Lesly Cruz (Options), Thanh Lam (MPNH), Jordan Bryan (IRB), Brad Kinnie (JHC), Roberto Ortega (JHC), Barry Growe (JHC), Liam McQuillan (MOSAIC), Daniel Michael (MOSAIC), Tracy Tang (MOSAIC), Ash Rush (MOSAIC), Salih Arif (MOSAIC), Sabrina Dumitra (AMSSA), Jaswinder Sandhu (PICS), Geeta Bhardwaj (Archway CS), Monika Izaak (Archway CS), Wen Ren (LMNH), Alex Kang (MUNI), Jerry Wu (SWIS Vancouver), Kanta Naik (SWIS Abbotsford), Anastasia Gaisenok (PIRS), Wazhma Wakil (Umbrella MHC), Giuliana Lira (DIVERSEcity), Louisa Brett (Covenant House), Khalil Al Zahran (Rainbow Refugee), Julia Wu (bc211), Diana Barry (Vancity), Kelly Rader (Inasmuch), Loren Balisky (Kinbrace), Derek Chu (Kinbrace), Adriana Zepeda (Kinbrace), Fran Gallo (Kinbrace), Masi Allahverdi (Ready Tour), Huda Bolbolan (SVNH), Amina Osman (Jumpstart Refugee Talent), Sadiq Mohabi (SOS-ISSofBC), Katya Quintanilla (SOS-ISSofBC), Mina Khodabakhshi (ISSofBC), Sireen El-Nashar (Zaytuna), Saleem Spindari (Muslim Food Bank), Ali Mustafa (Muslim Food Bank), Richard Soo (ECC), Imtiaz Popat (SEHAT/Fraser Health), Catherine Williams (Le Relais), Jenny Moss (MAP)

Special Guests: Koyali Burman, Nova Chamberlin (Vancouver LIP)

Bahar Taheri, Mona Hassania - presenters

Regrets: Joni Rose (MUNI), Mohsen Eslami (SOS-ISSofBC), Ana Maria Bustamente (Burnaby Family Life/BLIP)

Welcome from Co-Chair: Jenny Lam.

Jenny acknowledged and thanked the hən̓qəmin̓əm̓ (**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 read the letter received from the BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs reinstating IHAP funding for refugee Claimants (see attached). The letter was received by MAP Executive and MAP Housing Working Group with much appreciation, and a letter as such was sent to the BC Government and Federal Departments of Immigration and the Standing Committee on Immigration.

Jenny welcomed participants from **34 MAP member agencies**.

First time introductions:

- Catharine Williams – works with francophone organization: Le Relais

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

The **Agenda** was outlined. Three breakout rooms were pre-assigned: mental health, settlement and housing.

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

The April 24, 2021, meeting Minutes were approved with no changes or additions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

Referrals to the IRB-RPD in the region for January – May 15, 2022:

580 individual claims (864 when dependents included)

Top 5 producing countries – numbers include principals and associates:

Iran – 242

India – 137

Mexico – 118

Colombia - 62

Afghanistan - 37

IRB continues operations as normal and expanding in-office presence including opportunities for in-person hearings. These instructions and options will be in the letters of notifications to appear sent to claimants.

There were no questions for the IRB.

Jenny thanked Jordan 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 the IRB with your request.*

- **World Refugee Day 2022 Updates**

3 events offered:

- 1) **June 15 Vancouver Public Library: A New Belonging: Stories to Celebrate World Refugee Day**
at Vancouver Public Library Central Branch 350 West Georgia – Alice McKay Room (downstairs)
Five women from **The Shoe Project** share their stories accompanied by music on santoor played by Saeid Kooshki
Doors open 6:30 – event starts at 7pm
Registration required at: <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/events/628e9764934f852f000f9d25>
Hosted by MAP BC and Vancouver Public Library
- 2) **June 20: WORLD REFUGEE DAY CELEBRATION** in Vancouver
at **Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House** 12pm – 2pm
City of Vancouver Proclamation, refugee speakers and stories, music and refreshments.
Agencies welcome to display their information via a slideshow – send in your electronic information to Amina amina.osman@jumpstartrefugee.ca to coordinate, or bring paper copies with you.
This event welcomes everyone, especially agencies from Vancouver, Burnaby, North Shore etc.
Registration required at: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/a-new-belonging-world-refugee-day-celebration-tickets-350594456457>
Hosted by MAP, City of Vancouver and Vancouver Local Immigration Partnership (VLIP)
- 3) **June 20: SURREY WORLD REFUGEE DAY CELEBRATION for agencies south of the Fraser.**
at **Surrey Central Library**
Speaker panel, Proclamation, Music and dance, refreshments, agency information
4pm – 6pm
Hosted by Surrey LIP, DIVERSEcity, Options and MAP local agencies.
More information soon.

Thank you to all those volunteers who have been helping to put these events together.

All updates will be posted on the MAP website at: <https://mapbc.org/world-refugee-day-celebrations-2022/> and on social media.

- **Vancouver Local Immigration Partnership Newly Reconvened:**

Jenny welcomed VLIP Co-managers: Nova Chamberlin & Koyali Burman from South Vancouver Neighbourhood House
(slides attached)

Nova recognized the traditional territories where VLIP operates and Koyali recognized its funders: IRCC LIPS were created to optimize multi-sectoral approaches to settlement

Started in BC in 2014 and there are over 80 LIPs throughout Canada.

The structure has shifted with transition from municipal to community leadership:

In Vancouver SVNH and MPNH have accepted leadership and Koyali and Nova are the co-chairs.

A Feasibility study was conducted to examine the viability of VLIP.

Directions and Objectives have been identified to maximize cross-sectoral collaboration on shared issues (see objectives listed)

Structure: VLIP Management Team: SVNH/MPNH ED's, VLIP Co-Managers and communication coordinator.

VLIP Council: includes settlement agencies, business, health, educational institutions

VLIP Immigrant Advisory Committee: voices of those with lived experience to inform decisions

VLIP Strategic Working Groups focused on areas of need

Welcomed many traditional and new members

VLIP Engagement: Strategic planning prioritization has started so members can get involved

Organizations encouraged to share best practices and trainings.

Collaborative research – involved with various academic institutions

Create awareness and effect system change through some advocacy

See slides for more information online.

Contacts: nova.chamberlin@vancouverlip.org

koyali.burman@vancouverlip.org

Jenny Lam thanked Nova and Koyali for their presentation

Presentation: The mental health well-being of refugees: areas of opportunity

Mona Hassania - Registered Clinical Counsellor (RCC) and founder of Nia Counselling

Bahar Taheri - Lead consultant: Blue Tree Project Solutions Inc, BC Refugee Hub

Jenny Lam introduced the 2 speakers:

Mona Hassannia is a Registered Clinical Counsellor (RCC) and founder of Nia Counselling providing individual therapy and mental health workshops to front-line staff and clients in the settlement sector. She has over 15 years of frontline 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) 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 consulting projects and initiatives geared towards the capacity building of frontline staff and the organizations that serve them.

Bahar Taheri is the founder and lead consultant with Blue Tree Project Solutions Inc. She has been working in the settlement and integration sector for over 10 years in a variety of roles. Currently, she's the lead project consultant managing ISSofBC's BC Refugee Hub. Bahar has developed several mental health and wellbeing toolkits for the BC Refugee Hub and the content and multimedia tools for AMSSA's Refugee Mental Health Frontline Workers Training e-learning course. Bahar aims to include the voices and experiences of newcomers and refugees in the work she does in the settlement and integration sector.

SEE slides attached for the Presentation

Background: developed a mental health and wellbeing toolkit based on one from back east
Surrey LIP enabled them to survey frontline staff about the mental health needs of refugees in order to finalize the design of the mental health toolkit – they received over 50 responses.

Key challenges that emerged:

- Lack of newcomer awareness of services
- Stigma attached to mental health issues
- Lack of multilingual supports in newcomer mental health resources

Respondents also felt there was a lack of culturally appropriate mental health resources for newcomer populations

Believe that there is a gap in training for frontline workers – to alleviate this gap they suggested training, improvement of resources, sharing resources, more funding to provide resources especially in remote areas.

Mental health of refugees has always been a high priority and resources have always been missing. The toolkit is built to mitigate barriers to access, use best practices and aim to improve settlement and mental health outcomes

(Questions were put to the MAP meeting participants to promote discussions to provide a second iteration of the toolkit – for refugees and particularly refugee claimants.

1. In your experience of working with refugee populations, what are the gaps and challenges?
2. In terms of training, what is needed for supporting this population?
3. How can the settlement and integration sector better connect with mental health resources?
4. What role can “mainstream” mental health professionals and services play in addressing some of the needs?)

Questions and Comments:

Kanta (Abbotsford SWIS team) How can we assist school counselors so they can receive more cultural competency training?

Response: research shows that cultural competency is quite low when working with refugees, and there is a call for a deeper training from counsellors.

There isn't enough support for school aged children (aged 6–12-year-olds) and definitely need more training for counselors, teachers and SWIS workers as well as the family.

Louisa (Covenant House): many of their residents have compounded trauma from home country/journey/reception here in Canada
Many counselors do not feel equipped to deal with this

Also, at Covenant House they work with 16 – 25 years; and there are not enough resources for those who reach 24. Wait lists can be long, not enough financial resources and lack of deep skills.

Covenant House tries to provide the help needed, but there are very few resources for this age group.

Response: deep cultural competency training is needed to fill this gap.

Anastasia (PIRS) Vicarious trauma is a constant thread in experiences for their multilingual outreach workers who provide peer support but are not registered counselors.

Mainstream mental health support is often inaccessible and not culturally appropriate.

Can we not use more foreign trained professionals?

Response: this is noted as a repeated ask.

Khalil (Rainbow Refugee) Compare the experience of refugees in their countries of origin/transit in the camps there is provision of good quality appropriate, mental health services, but when they arrive here, they see a gap.

There seems to be a lack of culturally appropriate service, and even staffing here.

Response: It would be useful to look at what refugees did receive pre-arrival and if we can learn from this.

Amina (JumpStart) Since beginning of 2022 the majority of her clients are newly arrived Afghans –

- very fast set up needed in Canada when they arrive

- suffering isolation because of COVID

- so much to do at the start - everything is so new to them and overwhelming.

JumpStart tries to provide support and realizes that they are in contact with so many organizations and the whole process in itself produces anxiety.

More online therapy needed.

Maybe also a platform worldwide open to all refugees worldwide with professionals to help online.

Response (Mona): trauma for Afghans is different because they come straight from conflict zone (they do not have time in a camp to get some help) and for their children who are also suffering anxiety.

Not a homogenous group – need to consider the experience of different refugees.

We need to be able to pivot for different populations

Response (Bahar) – so important to support frontline workers who listen to traumatic stories and are not trained to cope with this.

Huda (South Vancouver NH)- how culturally appropriate is it to talk about mental health? This term creates a barrier and may turn people off.

This is a strong experience with the South Asian community – they use ‘Healthy Minds – Healthy Lives’

Also What does a trauma informed training in Canada look like as it relates to helping someone coming from a different country?

Our understandings of this are so different. Some trauma may be more like ‘a way of life’ for many and needs a response that understands this.

Response: yes, language is so important – and naming workshops/treatments in a culturally appropriate way is important for success.

Important to take an anti-oppressive framework that can place the individual in the center - in the way they perceive their trauma within their own contexts.

Thanh (MPNH) - I want to add that we have seen an increased need for family/partner counselling in refugee populations (same as in the wider community); as well as familial and intimate relationships

undergoing stress, but the bare minimum "accessible" supports are limited to individuals only, with a limit on # of sessions and range of scope/depth of issues.

BREAK: Members met in following breakout rooms for informal discussion:
Refugee Claimant Mental Health, Settlement, Housing

Report back on MAP Strategy Meeting – what comes next?

Led by Brad Kinnie (Journey Home Community) and Loren Balisky (Kinbrace)

Loren – Recapped the issues – expressed in the lack of co-chair nominations to replace Jenny Lam now. Usually there is no problem finding a co-chair but when no-one stepped forward, we asked: What is going on here? why is no-one stepping forward?
Brad and Loren volunteered to help with this process – even though time is scarce they are helping because they care for the MAP community and what it means for refugee claimants.

There have been two meetings that MAP members were invited to:

April 14 and May 19.

The concerns that emerged:

- significant decision making for MAP Executive – they do not feel able to take on this responsibility
- MAP has become more complex not in structure but in what it's doing (4 projects: BC CHARMS, MAP BCiHC Support Program, Emergency Plan & Public Education initiatives)
- It is time for a new strategic plan as the last one took place in 2018

We have crafted a **motion for MAP** for next steps from the last two special meetings:

As an intervention to address the lack of co-chair nomination and to relieve identified pressures on the MAP Executive Structures, especially for MAP Co-chair role, MAP members will:

- 1. Immediately establish an Advisory Committee with 4-6 MAP Partner members with job descriptions that meet once a month to broaden decision making, support the Co-chairs and advise and direct MAP.**
Notes: the interest of various MAP members attending these meetings is noted and so this proposal would be just a little time commitment to provide support and expert advice to the MAP Executive.
- 2. Maintain the Co-Chair role as structured immediately seek a co-chair nomination and update the Co-Chair Job Description establishing boundaries designed to create definition in the role, with the goal of making it manageable and sustainable.**
Notes: we need to pare down the load on the co-chairs and share it with other MAP members through these suggested structures to make it more sustainable.
- 3. Employ a decision-making matrix for the MAP community**
Notes: this idea emerged at the last meeting and the matrix preferred is borrowed back from MOSAIC's CHARMS model so that everyone knows who can make decisions in each context and it will help with streamlining efficient decision-making.

4. **Establish a shared decision-making model to support co-chairs in MAP projects (CHARMS, MAP BCIHC Support Program, Public Education, Emergency Task Force) by identifying a lead representative.**

Notes: Right now the co-chairs attend all the meetings to support the projects and make decisions, but there are structures for many of these projects (Advisory Committees/individuals) who could step up and help with decisions.

5. **Bring capacity to completing the Emergency Plan by using the existing \$10,000 to hire an Emergency Planning Consultant.**

Notes: these are funds that have been sitting since 2019. This would immediately take pressure off the MAP Executive to get this project completed.

6. **In Fall 2022 move into Strategic Planning to review TOR, funding and strategic directions.**

Jenny Lam Opened the discussion for MAP members comments:

Brad added: we are aware that the co-chair role must be re-designed so that it is manageable, and the load can be shared.

Strategic Planning in the fall may look at other models: should it be an NGO? Should it hire leaders? But the model proposed today is **just for the end of June until March 2023 when funding needs change**. This will provide support temporarily until the Strategic Plan is completed.

Loren asked those present at the meetings were asked to confirm that the report above reflected the content of the meetings?

Jenny Lam – confirmed that this reflects discussions at the meetings – and repeated that there seem to be people interested in helping in various positions.

Kelly Rader (Inasmuch) Thank you Loren and Brad for spearheading this. I agree you represented well what was discussed (at the May 19 meeting)

Khalil (RR) – added that the sector really needs advocacy, and it is best placed through collaboration like MAP which then needs to be well-structured in order to function.

Jenny Moss – encouraged participation because MAP depends on its members to step up and help.

Thanh: Thanked Brad and Loren for leading this reflection process and for presenting proposed solutions from our meeting last week. The job descriptions will really help and will be finalized soon

Fran – will Advisory Team members be team leads also?

Response from Loren: This has not been decided – we are looking for efficiencies in the new model just to help MAP continue in a restrained, sustained fashion while we do the strategic visioning. So this is definitely a possible idea.

Brad: Asked the Membership: Would there be a general agreement to move ahead with these recommendations for now until March 23.

RESULT: Passed unanimously with 33 present.

Brad: we are pleased to reach this consensus and the challenge now is to get wider involvement so we will come back to MAP with these requests at the next meeting together with job descriptions.

Monika (Archway) – what is the difference between Partner and Participant agencies in terms of helping out?

Jenny Moss explained the different levels of commitment between the two levels which is a decision each agency can make on joining:

Partner agencies – (listed on website) – commit to attending all meetings and taking on positions of responsibility from time to time.

Participants do not have to attend all meetings or assume responsibilities at MAP.

Voting could potentially be restricted to Partner members only, but MAP prefers to make decisions by consensus when possible.

Jenny Lam thanked Brad and Loren for the Report.

BC CHARMS Update - Liam McQuillan

Liam recapped BC CHARMS project for new attendees and described **the Project Launch** that took place on May 16 – there were many agencies at MOSAIC HQ

Provided presentations on BC CHARMS projects and training plans which you can find @BCCHARMS on LinkedIn where there is an article about the launch with pictures and a promotional video.

A few questions came up at the launch which Liam addressed:

- There are 3 roles in BC CHARMS:
Liaison – person at agency monitoring the users and helping with issues.
Users who are housing providers or settlement workers
All issues can also be run through Liam as first contact, Florance and Marzieh also.
- 60 licences purchased – each agency will get 1 or 2 licences depending on if they have housing AND settlement services. We will start with our familiar agencies first
- Training sessions – taking place currently
In June an updated schedule will go out: ideally twice a week in person and virtual on Tuesdays and Wednesdays
Watch for notification!

It is possible to do an in-person training onsite as a group – for example in Surrey where 2/3 agencies could attend together. Please contact Liam

- Privacy is a very important matter – Licenses or ID's are one per person – they cannot be shared between settlement workers. This will help with audits and tracking
Do not share ID's to protect privacy of clients and the sector.

- **Signing:** There will be an update on privacy and policy concerns following some questions Who signs where?
e.g., signing – a manager must sign on Schedule A, as well as the user.
- Please only send in the forms when you have reviewed the Privacy and Policies regarding BC CHARMS and signed them. This is so we BC CHARMS can keep track on how many licences are taken up.

Please keep up with information about future training sessions, and with social media posts and info from BC CHARMS on YouTube and LinkedIn @bccharms
Contact Liam at lmquillan@mosaicbc.org

AGENCY UPDATES VERBALLY (updates from the CHAT below)

World Refugee Day – please connect with info@mapbc.org if you have information to share at one of the celebrations. There will be tables for brochures available.

Adjourned at 11:50.

Next Meeting: Thursday June 23, 2022, online.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY:

Registration link for the June 15 library event with The Shoe Project:

<https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/events/628e9764934f852f000f9d25>

Find more World Refugee Day event information here: <https://mapbc.org/world-refugee-day-celebrations-2022/>

Nova Chamberlin (VLIP) please feel free to reach out to Koyali and I with any questions you might have about VLIP:
nova.chamberlin@vancouverlip.org, koyali.burman@vancouverlip.org

AGENCY UPDATES FROM THE CHAT

Imtiaz (South Asian Health Institute) We are still seeing newcomers not being aware of the need for COVID 19 Boosters.

Masi Allahverdi (Kinbrace)

Ready Tour Sessions/June:

- 3rd June, 9:30-11:30am PST
- 17th June, 9:30-11:30am PST
- 30th June, 9:30-11:30am PST
- 10th June, 9:30-11:30am PST, specifically for Farsi/Dari speaking Refugee Claimants

RAD Info Session:

- 1st June 2022, 1:00pm PST

Email me for Ready Tour referrals: Masi@kinbrace.ca

Liam McQuillan (BC CHARMS)

The Social Media channels are @BCCHARMS (YouTube and LinkedIn)

Liam's email: lmcquillan@mosaicbc.org

Khalil Al Zahran (he/him) (Rainbow Refugee)

Rainbow Refugee has online and in-person drop-ins (group meetings) for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugee claimants. The 1st online drop-in will happen on:

Thursday June 2 (every 1st Thursday of the month)

The 2nd in-person drop-in will happen on:

Thursday June 16 (3rd Thursday of the month).

Every Tuesday, we accept walk-ins at our center located at 1033 Davie St, #103, from 12:30 – 4:30 pm.

For more info, contact us at inland@rainbowrefugee.ca or at +1-604-339-2719

Catharine Williams - Le Relais Francophone is at <https://vivreencb.ca/>