

STRATEGY FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION 2023-2025 ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT REPORT

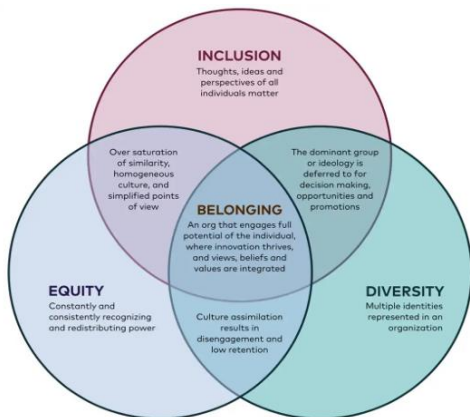
The Strategy defines key concepts:

Diversity – “who you are” – multiple identities represented; visible and non-visible differences between people.

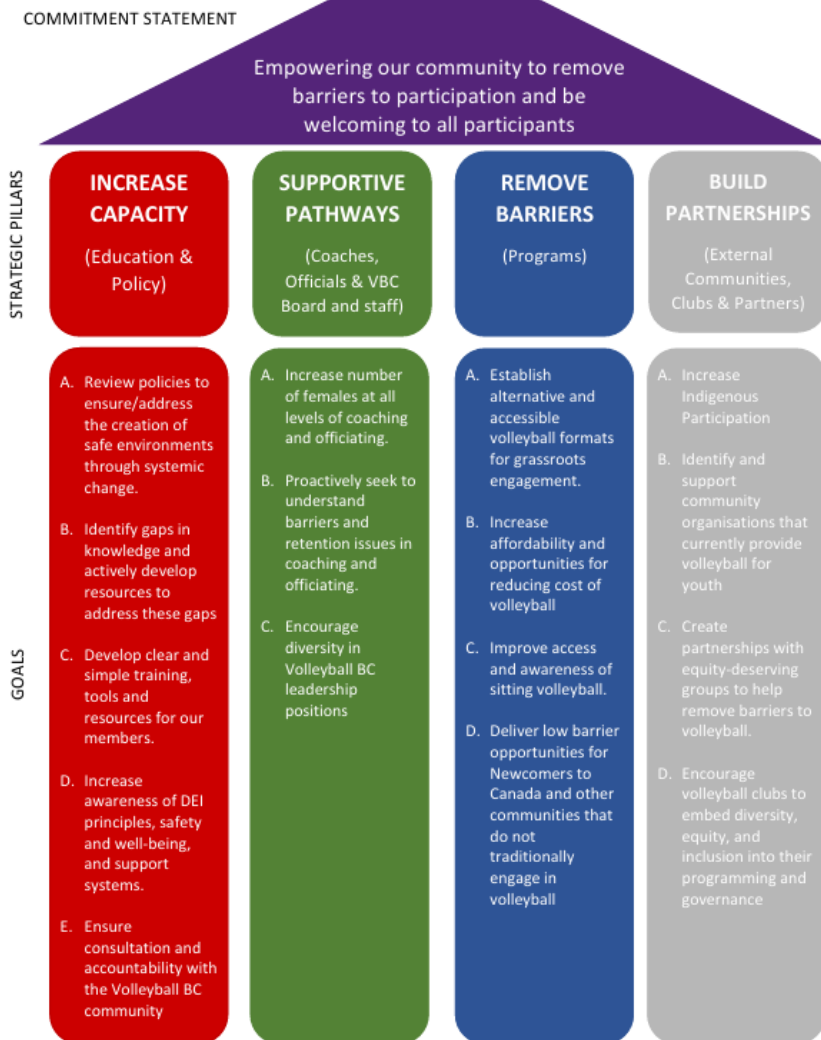
Equity – “addressing unique advantages or barriers” – the process of allocating resources, programs and decision-making fairly to all people without discrimination.

Inclusion – “what you need” – creating a culture that embraces, respects, and values difference so all people feel valued.

Belonging – “how you feel” – the experience of personal involvement in an environment or experience so people feel themselves to be an integral part of it. This is closely linked to the concepts above because people must feel welcome, safe, engaged, and included to feel belonging.



6. Our Strategy



In January 2023, we launched our Strategy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

This work was in support of our Strategic Plan’s goal of “Expanding our Reach” in which “programs, facilities, and resources are in place to create inclusive and welcoming opportunities for everyone to access.” The Strategy was the result of extensive consultation with players, coaches, referees, and clubs about inclusion in volleyball in BC.

We have now concluded 2 years of the Strategy. As part of our commitment to sharing with the volleyball community, this report summarises the achievements and impacts of the work undertaken to move the Plan forward.

It takes a community - and we are grateful for the support of our members, partners, Committees, Board, and staff who contributed to these accomplishments.

We particularly acknowledge the support of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Thank you!

March 2025

A. INCREASE CAPACITY

WHAT WE LEARNED...

- We need better data. We have not done a good job of capturing information about our registered participants beyond age, gender, and location. To learn how to both meet the needs of our existing members and expand our reach, we must ask more questions to understand demographic profiles and learn about lived experiences.
- Volleyball BC is working to address diversity, equity, and inclusion considerations within our policies and operations. We need to review existing policies to ensure that terminology, content, and considerations uphold our priority on DEI. There are also gaps in our operations where we need to evolve and address emerging issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- We have to diversify and expand our communications, marketing, and promotion of volleyball. Our use of imagery, language, and the stories that we tell are typically focused on certain demographics without consideration of other experiences.

WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO....

REVIEW POLICIES	IDENTIFY GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE	DEVELOP TRAINING TOOLS & RESOURCES	INCREASE AWARENESS OF DEI	ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY & CONSULTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Embed EDI philosophy into all policies.➤ Review procedures with fairness and psychological safety in mind.➤ Identify and complete gaps in policies and procedures➤ Make all policies and procedures easy to read and accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Create methods for data collection and information on demographics.➤ Identify and deliver training and education on DEI to VBC Board, staff and contractors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Assess opportunities and needs for training, tools and resources across all member group➤ Identify and implement tools and resources➤ Develop education opportunities around DEI topics➤ Create a member platform to share best practice and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Develop a communications plan to promote awareness and highlight work in DEI.➤ Create clear communication around different pathways and formats of volleyball.➤ Proactively seek and deliver diverse representation in VBC communications, including images, translation and all media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Establish a DEI Committee/Working Group.➤ Regularly report and evaluate DEI Strategy with engagement of community.

2023-2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ Creation and adoption by the Board of a [Commitment Statement for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility](#). First annual report against commitments shared in fall 2024.
- ✓ Demographic information captured in member and program/event registrations with first baseline report in November 2024.
- ✓ Annual Member Survey captured optional demographic data and member response to the statement “*I feel part of Volleyball BC*”. Annual review of data allowed us to capture issues and identify actions to improve belonging.
- ✓ Appointment of a DEI Committee in 2023, chaired by a Board member and with community representatives.
- ✓ Development of Plain English versions of [key policies](#) to promote easy to read and accessible information. Translation of key policies into French, Farsi, Cantonese, and Mandarin.
- ✓ Development of a communications calendar promoting work in this area and key national days, including International Women’s Day, and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
- ✓ 20 VBC staff completed Sport for Life’s Sport for Newcomers e-module and 4 VBC staff completed All Youth Matters, a viaSport BC workshop on creating inclusive youth sport programming.
- ✓ New photographs and media to reflect diverse representation of participants in volleyball.
- ✓ Creation of an Accessibility Checklist for VBC events
- ✓ Launch of a [Barrier Reporting Mechanism](#) to identify and report barriers to participation, allowing us to track issues and proactively address if possible.
- ✓ Annual reporting of progress against Strategy to DEI Committee and shared with members as part of progress report on Strategic Plan.

PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

- Create, maintain and share policies to ensure inclusive environments
- Training of VBC staff and coaches
- Monitoring and data collection
- Raising awareness and promotion.
- Effective and confidential issue reporting mechanisms
- Consultation and accountability to community



B. SUPPORTIVE PATHWAYS

WHAT WE LEARNED...

- Our members felt that Volleyball BC can play a unique role in providing resources, training, and tools to the volleyball community so that we can collectively provide programs and services that are more inclusive and welcoming to everyone
- We lack female coaches and referees, especially at the higher levels of coaching and officiating. Feedback from focus groups with female referees and coaches identified mentorship, connection, and profile-raising as key priorities to encourage more women and girls to take on these leadership roles.
- There is scope for Volleyball BC to be more intentional about encouraging diversity in its governance, leadership, and human resources. We can lead by example and ensure that we are reflective of the wider society in which we operate.

WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO....

INCREASE NUMBER OF FEMALES AT ALL LEVELS OF COACHING AND OFFICIATING	PROACTIVELY SEEK TO UNDERSTAND BARRIERS AND RETENTION ISSUES IN COACHING AND REFEREEING	ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY IN VBC LEADERSHIP POSITIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Conduct focus groups to identify barriers and opportunities.➤ Develop mentorship initiatives.➤ Facilitate opportunities for female coaches and referees to connect, collaborate, and support each other.➤ Create intentional opportunities for female coaches and referees in VBC activities and, where possible, in the wider volleyball community.➤ Showcase and raise the profile of female coaches and referees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Implement an optional exit interview process for VBC coaches and referees.➤ Capture and review demographic data about coaches and referees.➤ Create opportunities for feedback and consultation with coaches and referees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Embed DEI considerations into HR procedures and practices.➤ Regularly review Board and governance structure to identify opportunities to ensure diversity of leadership.➤ Explore internship and mentorship opportunities within VBC.

2023-2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ Participated in Canada Women and Sport's "Same Game Challenge", a 7-step supported process to review and embed gender equity from 2021-2022. Our focus was females in coaching and refereeing. Recommendations were integrated into the Strategy.
- ✓ Developed and delivered a Female Mentorship Program for referees and coaches in 2023 and 2024 with nearly 40 female-identifying individuals attending the sessions.
- ✓ Delivered several female-only events and activities, including female-only referee games, to create community and support.
- ✓ Captured and tracked demographic profile of coaches and referees with first benchmark report in 2024.
- ✓ Created dedicated sections of the Annual Member Survey to capture data, concerns, and priorities of coaches and referees. This included questions about intention to return for the next season which were designed to capture exit interview data. From 2022 to 2025, we saw a positive improvement on agreement from Coaches and Referees to the statement *"I feel part of Volleyball BC"*.
- ✓ Reviewed and revised the majority of the Terms of References for Board and Committees to include skills matrices and encourage diversity of representation.

PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

- Embed inclusive and safety-focused considerations into HR procedures and practices.
- Encourage diversity in VBC leadership and governance.
- Participate in Canadian Women and Sport's Gender Equity Playbook
- Improve female experience and increase female participation overall in coaching and refereeing.



C. REMOVE BARRIERS

WHAT WE LEARNED...

- Participation in volleyball is becoming an activity for those with money. In particular, club volleyball is getting more and more expensive which means that cost is becoming a barrier for those who have traditionally participated in our sport. This makes it even more challenging for groups that face additional barriers to participation.
- Addressing gender equity doesn't always mean women and girls. Our data shows that 70% of players in the club system are girls. We need to explore, address, and encourage more gender diversity in our participation.
- The Harry Jerome Sport Centre is the training home for the BC members of the Women's National Sitting Volleyball Team but sitting volleyball is not available at a community level and there is little awareness in British Columbia.

WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO....

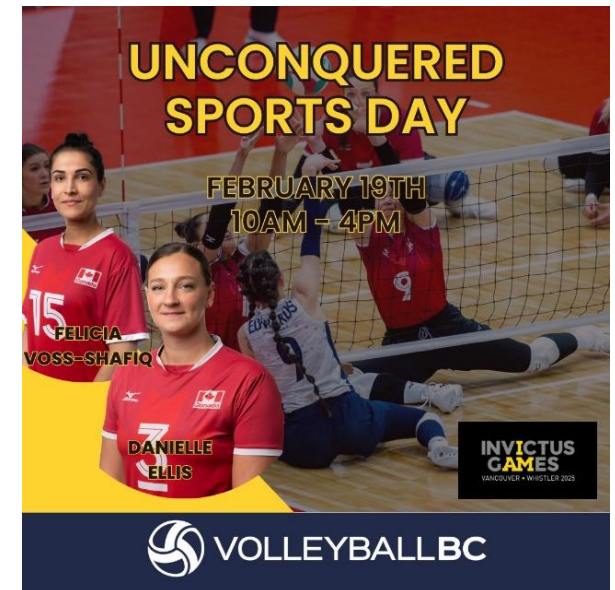
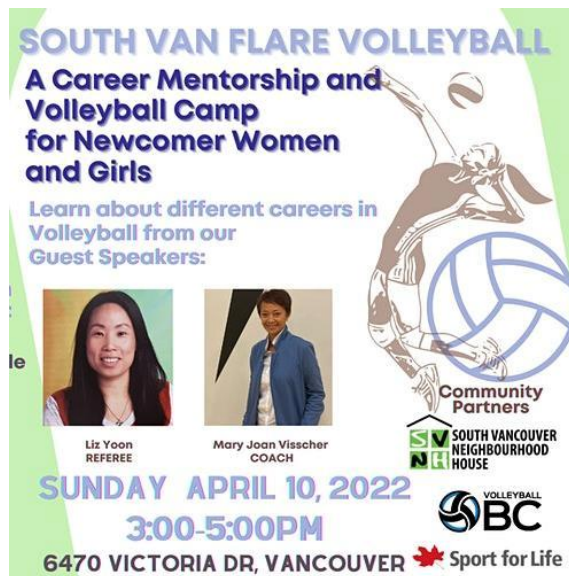
ALTERNATIVE AND ACCESSIBLE GRASSROOTS FORMATS	INCREASE AFFORDABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR REDUCING COST	IMPROVE ACCESS AND AWARENESS TO SITTING VOLLEYBALL	DELIVER LOW BARRIER OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEWCOMERS TO CANADA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop implementation plan for smashball. ➤ Research barriers to entry for boys or male-identifying individuals with a view to identifying actions to increase participation. ➤ Identify opportunities to showcase and pilot smashball. ➤ Pilot house leagues for smashball. ➤ Develop Train to Play programs for teen youth to bridge the gap of entry to the competitive model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify strategic partnerships/grant opportunities for low/no-cost programs. ➤ Create VBC bursaries and athlete support for high-cost VBC programs. ➤ Provide resources and support for clubs to fundraise and access grants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Initiate external partnerships and grant opportunities to support development of sitting volleyball. ➤ Leverage our connection with national team athletes to identify opportunities to showcase and pilot sitting volleyball within existing VBC events and programs. ➤ Create opportunities for coach development to support sitting volleyball. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Secure multi-year funding to ensure sustainability of Intro to Volleyball for Newcomers program. ➤ Deliver a minimum of 1 Newcomer pilot program for every region in BC. ➤ Identify new partnerships to reach a diversity of groups within the Newcomer community. ➤ Share best practice and develop a tool kit and resources for a) clubs to deliver newcomer programming and for b) community agencies interested in delivering volleyball.

2023-2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ Implemented Smashball across VBC programs, as a new grassroots and accessible format of volleyball. In 2024 we delivered 5 programs on Vancouver Island, 72 in the Lower Mainland, 23 in the Fraser Valley, 3 in Kootenays and 3 in the Okanagan.
- ✓ Signed a Memorandum of Understanding to deliver the sitting volleyball component of the 2025 Invictus Games. As part of this, we held a coach and referee clinic on sitting volleyball, delivered sitting volleyball “try it” sessions, and are currently developing educational and training resources for community and schools programs.
- ✓ Piloted and developed an Introduction to Volleyball Program for newcomer youth in partnership with community and settlement agencies in Vancouver, Victoria, Richmond, Surrey, Abbotsford and Penticton. Delivered 13 programs from 2021-2024 and successfully achieved gaming grant funding for VBC programming in this area.
- ✓ Identified new bursaries for Team BC athletes and female coaches and referees to be launched as part of VBC’s 60th anniversary celebrations in 2025.
- ✓ Hosted online webinars for clubs to encourage and support access to provincial gaming grants.

PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

- Development of a new recreational pathway for VBC programs.
- Improve awareness and resources to support sitting volleyball.
- Engage in partnerships and share best practices for inclusive programming for equity-deserving groups
- Launch VBC bursaries.



D. BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

WHAT WE LEARNED...

- Club volleyball is only one pathway in volleyball. We must create other accessible formats, programs, and pathways for people to experience volleyball, particularly at a grassroots level or by working with other community agencies that can reach different demographics.
- We support the Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council, particularly with their Team BC volleyball programs, but we could be more proactive and identify other collaborative opportunities with indigenous groups and communities.

WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO....

INCREASE INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION	IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS THAT PROVIDE YOUTH VOLLEYBALL	CREATE PARTNERSHIPS WITH EQUITY-DESERVING GROUPS TO REMOVE BARRIERS	ENCOURAGE VOLLEYBALL CLUBS TO EMBED DEI INTO PROGRAMMING & GOVERNANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Strengthen relationship with ISPARC to increase support for high performance and grassroots programming opportunities.➤ Identify other Indigenous groups including: Friendship centers, youth groups, schools, etc.➤ Create a plan of initiatives in response to specific assistance that communities need to thrive.➤ Implement identified actions and initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Environmental scan of youth programs that engage in or could engage in volleyball outside of the club system (eg. boys and girls clubs, YMCA, afterschool groups, etc).➤ Create and deliver resources to support community organisations and youth programs without 'taking over' the space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Undertake a provincial scan to identify potential partnerships and opportunities with equity deserving groups.➤ Identify the needs and support required to support equity-deserving groups participate in volleyball	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Share best practice for clubs on diversity in governance and leadership.➤ Develop toolkits, resources and support for clubs to implement accessible grassroots and community programs.

2023-2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ Worked with Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation Council (ISPARC) to support volleyball programming in indigenous communities as required.
- ✓ Participated in Provincial Committee for ISPARC's Team BC volleyball programming to support selection of coaches and athletes for the North American Indigenous Games.
- ✓ Integrated land acknowledgements and knowledge keepers as standard practice for VBC's major gatherings and events.
- ✓ Developed a tool for volleyball clubs to assess diversity, equity, and inclusion practices within their organisations (as part of the Mental Health Toolkit).
- ✓ Organised ad-hoc opportunities to share learning and best practices for volleyball clubs, such as creating welcoming environments for transgender athletes (Fall 2024).

PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

- Develop principles/criteria for engaging in partnerships or initiatives.
- Share best practices for member organisations.
- Identify and partner in education opportunities for membership.
- Strengthen relationship with ISPARC .



*What
happens
next?*

Over the last 3 years, we achieved some of the activities that we outlined in the Strategy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, However there is still much to be done and creating an inclusive environment remains a commitment for Volleyball BC.

In 2025 we will be developing a **new framework to integrate safety, diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility** across our work. Visit <https://volleyballbc.org/about/strategic-initiatives/> to see the new framework when it is launched.

- Volleyball BC