

EVERYONE'S GAME

SASKATCHEWAN SOCCER ASSOCIATION'S DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND EQUITY STRATEGY

Saskatchewan Soccer Association (SSA) is the designated provincial sport governing body for soccer in Saskatchewan. As such, SSA is entrusted by the statutes of FIFA and the constitution of Canada Soccer with the mandate of fostering, developing, and promoting soccer in our province.

As the governing body of soccer in Saskatchewan, we have witnessed firsthand soccer as a vehicle for development of individual character, resilience, and work ethic. Soccer allows for a shared experience and it has the power to bring people together, even in times of hardship. It is only, by fostering this togetherness and by promoting and valuing diversity, and intentionally building inclusive equitable environments, that we can appreciate the full potential of soccer.

Over the years, SSA has worked closely with its Membership to offer them the tools and resources to develop great athletes and connect healthy communities through lifelong participation in soccer. Existing strategies include Adaptive Soccer, Diverse Gender, Indigenous, Newcomer, Rural, and Women and Girls. However, SSA recognizes there is still progress to be made and its responsibility to continue to listen, learn, and lead the way in abolishing all forms of discrimination in soccer.

During the 2020 summer we asked for leaders in the soccer community to come forward and assist in developing inclusive strategies that will have a long-term impact in soccer. Our members responded and stepped up to give their voice in the design and implementation of our Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Strategy. Members are represented from around the province including: Rosetown, Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, and Lloydminster. The advisory group provided guidance to development of this initial strategy and their valuable work will continue by supporting, evaluating, and guiding strategies going forward.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms have these meanings in this Strategy:

- a. Diversity – is about the individual. The range of human unique differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religion, national origin, political beliefs, body type, athletic ability, ancestry, colour, citizenship, creed, disability, family, or marital status. Diversity embraces people's characteristics and qualities, unique backgrounds, experiences, and ways of relating to one another.
- b. Inclusion – is about collectively and intentionally creating a culture that strives for acceptance of all individuals, and that respects and values difference.
- c. Equity – is about taking action to provide everyone access to opportunities regardless of advantages, challenges or barriers that exist.
- d. Under-Represented Groups – include women, people of low socio-economic status, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, visible minorities, newcomers to Canada, and members of the LGBTQI2S community.

- e. **Members** - include SSA Regular and Associate Member Organizations, as well as member affiliated organizations (clubs, zones, etc.), organizers and participants.

PURPOSE

SSA has a responsibility to take decisive action to acknowledge and address diversity gaps, and to create a safe and welcoming environment for all individuals to enjoy the sport of soccer. We know that we need to do more to accomplish that vision and this strategy demonstrates that we are striving to achieve this goal. In SSA day to day operations, this strategic approach involves six key steps and intersecting objectives that are crucial to embrace our diversity, inclusion, and equity values.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

To further improve diversity, inclusion, and equity in our sport, SSA is taking the following actions:

1. **Education:** Be attentive to, listen and become educated on recognition of diversity gaps in soccer and provide resources for our members to establish and nurture an inclusive environment.
2. **Engagement:** Recognize the need to have open conversations about diversity, inclusion, and equity, and to listen to the voices of underrepresented groups.
3. **Policy & Terminology:** An active review of policy in soccer is underway, with a focus on ensuring terminology and principles are inclusive of SSA's diverse membership.
4. **Programming:** SSA will work towards supporting programs and resources that address diversity, inclusion, and equity issues in soccer.
5. **Marketing & Communications:** A campaign will highlight leaders in our membership having conversations and promoting action in diversity, inclusion, and equity with the goal to generate further dialogue in our community. In addition, clear and visible statements about diversity, inclusion, and equity will be incorporated on our website, social media, and marketing materials.
6. **Leadership & investment:** SSA will play a leadership role in raising awareness and understanding of diversity, inclusion, and equity amongst members. SSA resolves to continue to incorporate diversity, inclusion, and equity matters in its strategies, plans, actions, and operations, including recruitment, employment, accommodation, career and management opportunities, compensation, technical programs, business management, sponsorship, marketing, media, and communications.

2021-22 OBJECTIVES

SSA will strive to achieve the following objectives in 2021-22:

- Provide SSA staff and Board members with education and awareness of diversity gaps in soccer.
- Ensure diverse groups are represented and profiled in the media, both in social media postings and in news stories generated about the strategy.
- Review, recommend and provide educational training and resources for our members to establish and nurture an inclusive, diverse, and equitable environment.
- Build and integrate equitable opportunities as a key consideration when developing, updating, or delivering programs and policies.

- Provide inclusive opportunities for leadership development with a sustainable approach based on resources available.
- Ensure individuals are neither disadvantaged nor denied access to programming based on personal characteristics.
- Review SSA Code of Conduct to help ensure that individuals of all races, genders, sexual orientations, and abilities feel welcome in SSA programs and events.
- Promote and assist Member Organizations to develop and implement their own diversity, inclusion, and equity strategies.

EVALUATION

To ensure that diversity, inclusion, and equity remains a high priority for SSA, and to promote an organizational culture that embrace these values, SSA will annually self-assess and seek membership feedback to maintain our collective commitments. Objectives will be reported and redefined yearly to continue to grow and evaluate progress.

Review Date: October 15

Approval Date: December 1

Review Cycle: Yearly

CONCLUSION

SSA recognizes that the commitments above are just the beginning. There is still a great deal that can be done to make soccer more inclusive. SSA is committed to and the promotion of inclusion, diversity, and equity as ongoing processes. We understand that we can not do this alone; we need our members to be actively involved and make a commitment to creating a positive change in sport.

We look forward to working with our members, and communities, to contribute to, helping build a healthier, happier society that benefits from everyone's involvement, which will make us all better as a result.