

Integration Through Sport and Recreation:

Advancing Inclusive, Client-Centric, and Holistic Practices to Support Newcomers' Participation in Social and Cultural Life in Canada

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Territory Acknowledgment

Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people

We honour the traditional lands and homelands of all Indigenous peoples and communities across Canada, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis living both on and off reserve, in rural and urban communities





Partnerships

To navigate a complex system



Sport and Physical Activity can Foster Belonging

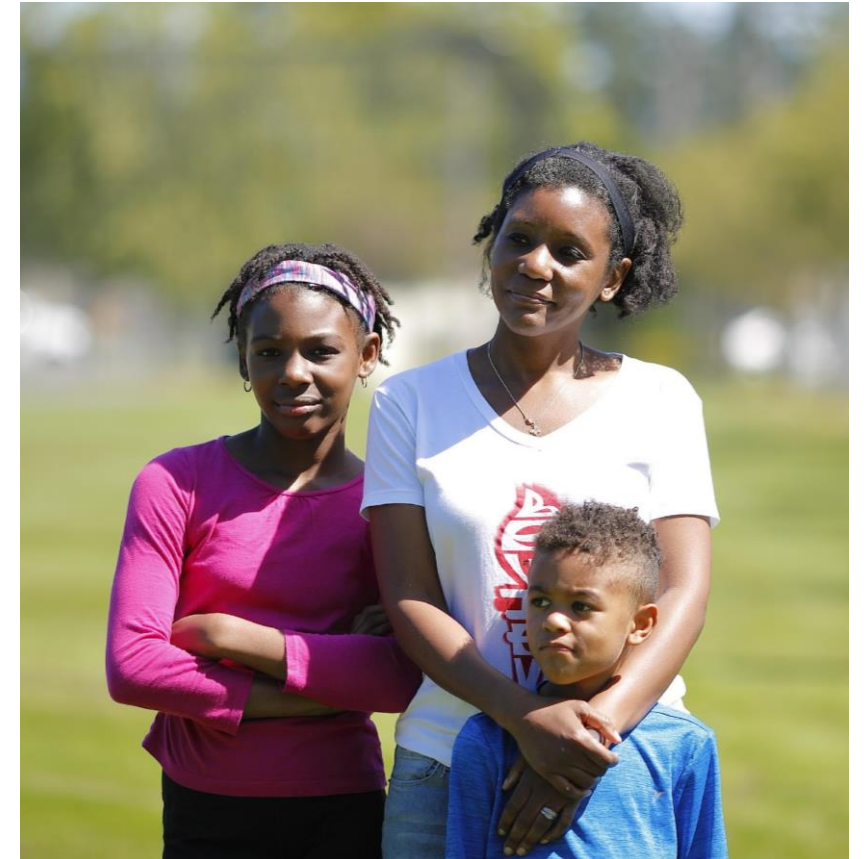
ICA's early experience using sport to help newcomers achieve settlement goals

- 2008 first exposure to sport - Victoria Minor Hockey Association and Hockey Canada
- Realized a need for sport to support families' connection and belonging.



Why?

- **Developing a sense of belonging and community engagement is important for people who are new to Canada (Sultana et al., 2022)**
- **Sport and physical activity can support:**
 - **Social inclusion, social cohesion and psychosocial wellbeing (Middleton et al., 2020; Rich et al., 2015; UNHCR, 2018)**
 - **Connection to community (Quirke, 2015)**
 - **Health and wellness (Ho et al., 2022)**

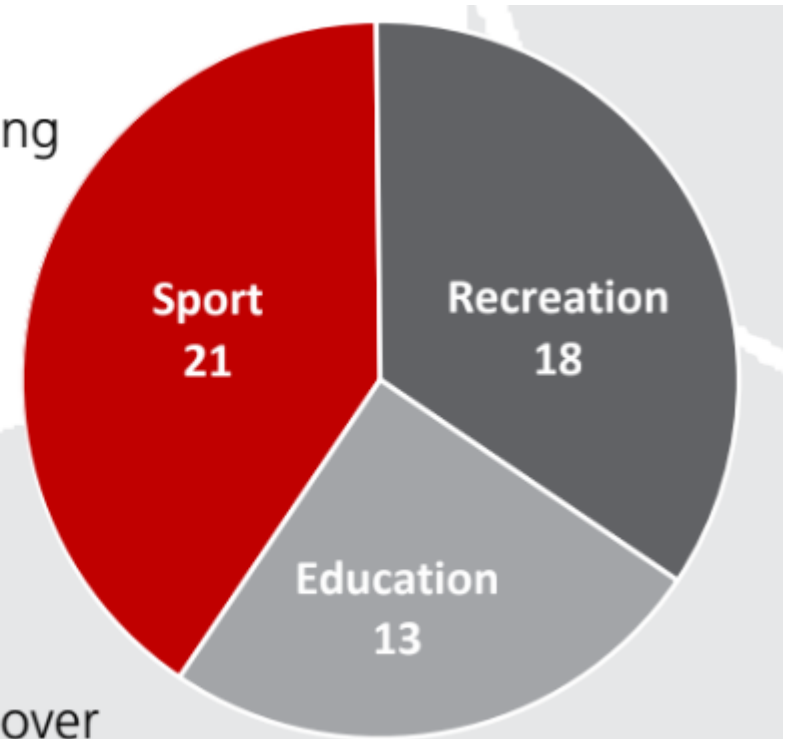


City of Victoria Needs Assessment - ORGANIZATIONS

- **45 Organizations** participated
 - **32** indicated they wished to offer P.A or Sport programs
 - Top challenges in offering programs: **Finance** for Staff / Volunteers and **Space**.
 - **All** agreed sport and P.A can foster a **sense of belonging**

Most organizations identified as operating in the sport, recreation or education space.

Most organizations surveyed serve under 100 new Canadians a year (19), however, five organizations serve over **500** new Canadians annually.



Example of Community Outreach

City of Victoria Newcomer Sport Activity Consultation



**Are You a
Newcomer
to Victoria?**

Do You Play Sports?

We Want to Hear From You!

 Sport for Life

 CITY OF
VICTORIA



**¿Eres un recién
llegado?**

¿Le gusta el deporte?

¡Queremos saber de ti!

 Sport for Life

 CITY OF
VICTORIA

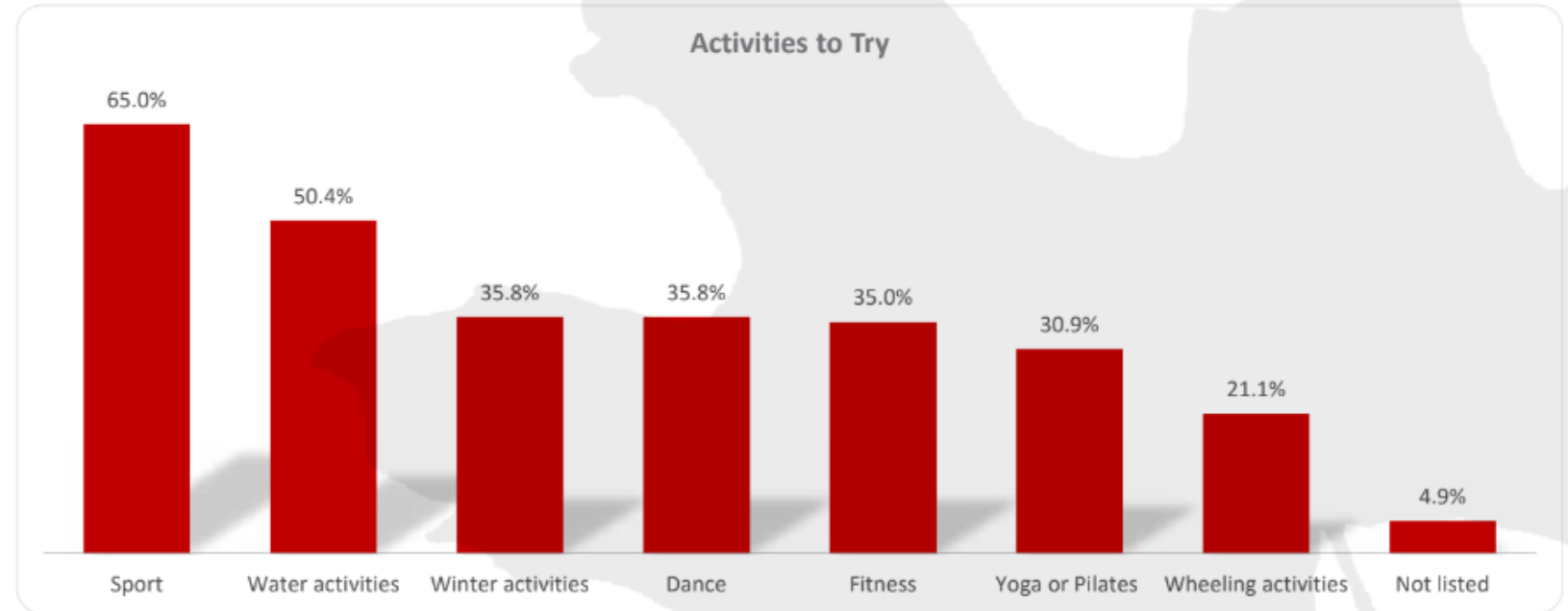
KEY INSIGHTS - NEWCOMERS

- **450** completed surveys; 6 focus groups
- 27 Languages spoken
 - Latin American, European and East Asian

Activities to Try:

*"What physical activities do you want to try?
Please select your top three choices:"*

Most popular choices for physical activities to try were **sport** (65%) and **water activities** (50.4%), followed by **winter activities** (35.8%), **dance** (35.8%) and **fitness** (35%).

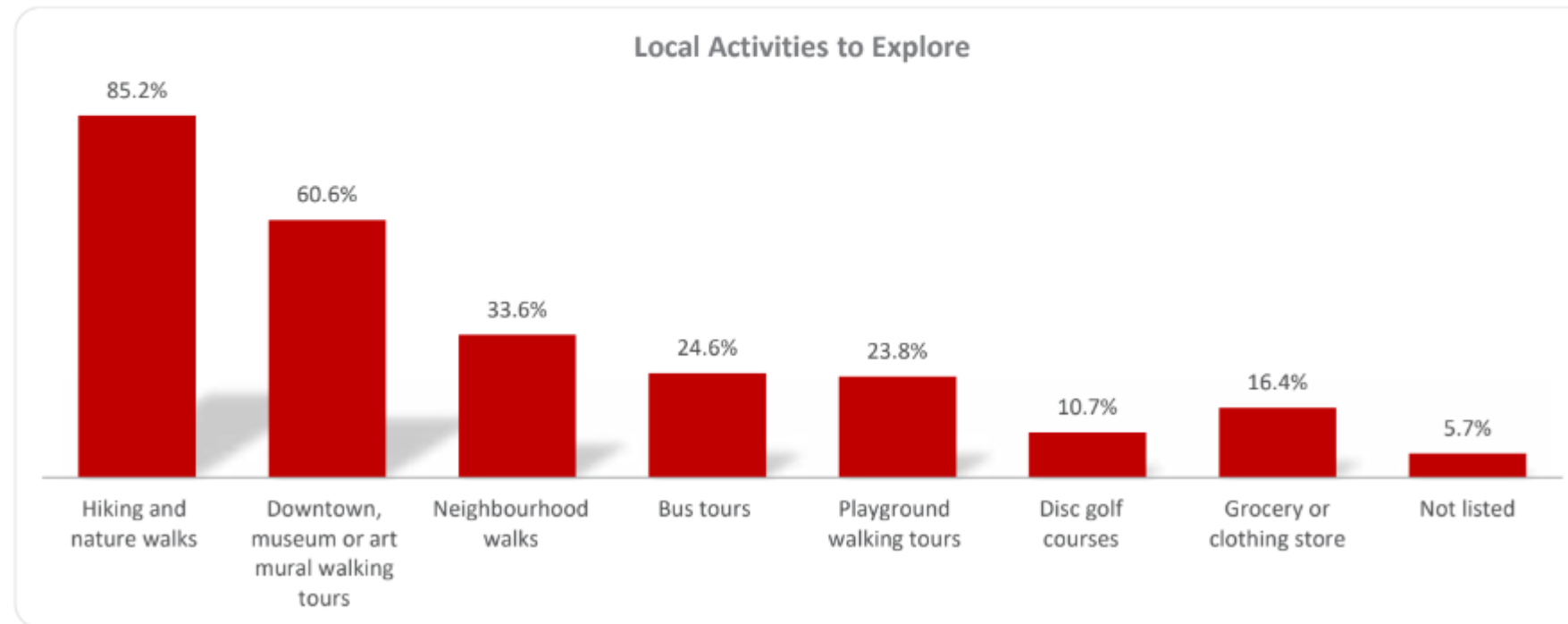


KEY INSIGHTS - NEWCOMERS

Local Activities to Explore:

"What local activities locally do you want to explore? Please select your top three choices:"

Top activity was **hiking** (85%) and **various walking activities** (downtown, neighbourhood, art and playground).

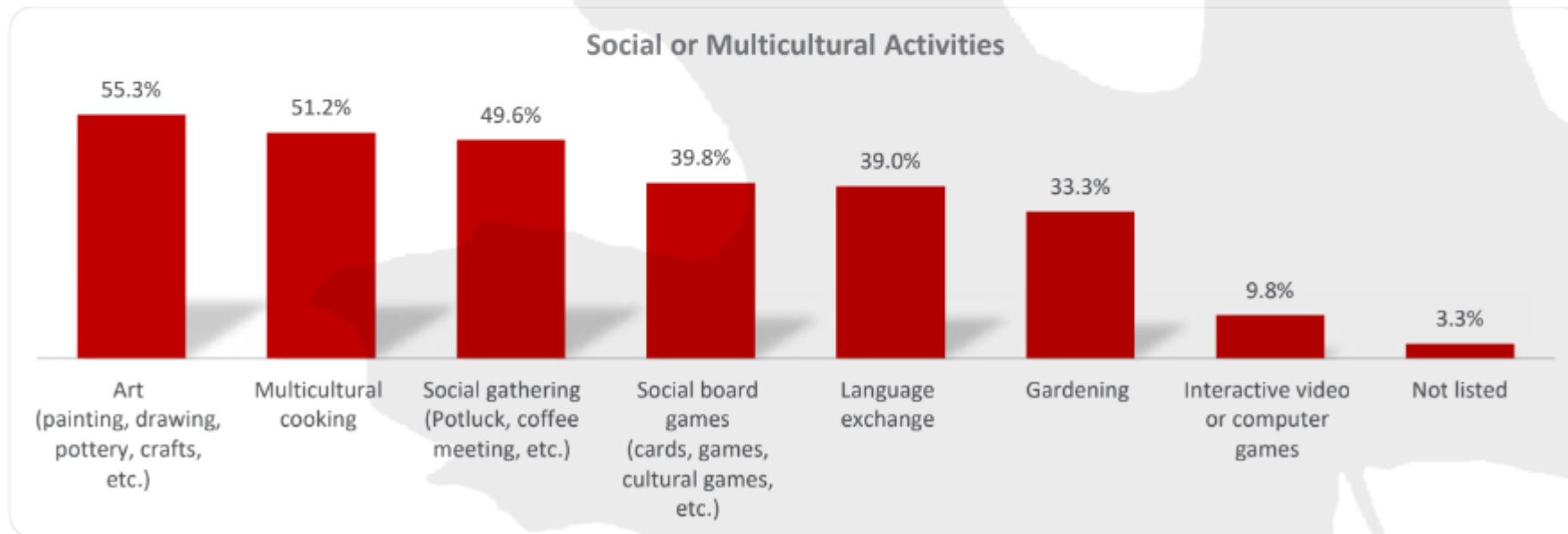


KEY INSIGHTS - NEWCOMERS

Social or Multicultural Activities:

"What social or multicultural activities do you want to try? Please select your top three choices:"

Newcomers often focus on employment, housing, health care, education, food and nutrition, which do not provide a connection to the community they have arrived to. Social and multicultural physical activities, both structured and unstructured, **provide the opportunity to connect** with said community and **understand the culture.**



100%
said YES

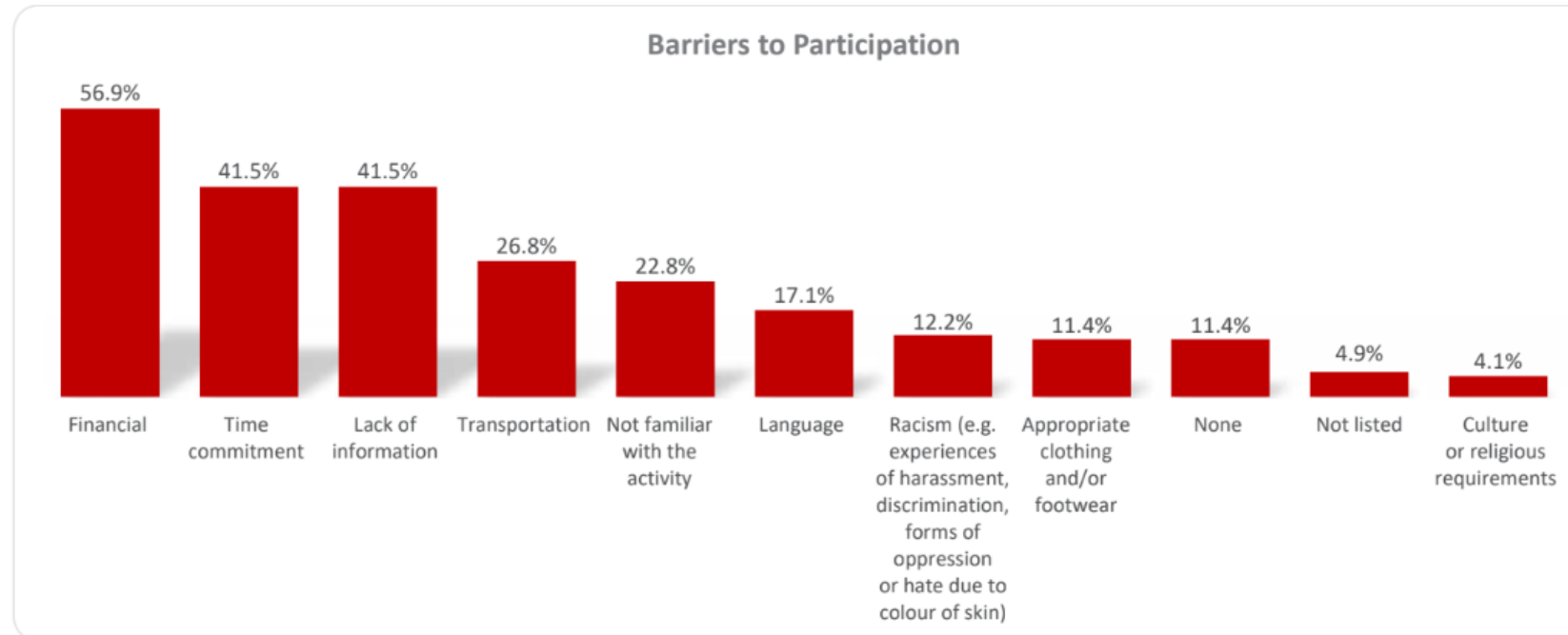
KEY INSIGHTS - NEWCOMERS

Barriers to Participation:

"Do you have any barriers preventing you from participating in activities? Please select as many barriers as you experience:"

56.9%
Financial Barrier

Financial is the biggest barrier (56.9%) followed by time commitment (41.5%) and lack of information (41.5%).





Co-Creating Solutions

Wellness through Community



Time for Action





Sport for Life



**Physical Literacy
for Life**



**Inter-Cultural
Association
of Greater Victoria**



Wellness Through Community Connections in Greater Victoria

Engaging Newcomers via Physical Activity

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2024/2025



Programs



Learn to Cycle program

Summer 2023

Climbing

20



Yoga



Soca Fit

2025



Nature Walks

2025 Salmon Run





Healthy Steps

Newcomer Swim Lessons



SWIM LESSONS



CRYSTAL POOL & FITNESS CENTRE
EVERY SATURDAY
JANUARY 10 - MARCH 14

Are you a newcomer, immigrant or refugee and want to learn how to swim and stay safe in the water?

WHO: Lessons spots available for Children, Youth and Adults

COST: Adult/Youth Lessons \$38.25 for 9 sessions
Child/Youth Lessons \$31.50 for 9 sessions
*L.I.F.E. Program Credit accepted

LESSON TIMES:
Children (ages 3-5) Octopus: 3:30 - 4:00
Children (ages 5-12) Swimmer 1: 5:00 - 5:30
Youth (ages 13-18) Lesson: 4:15 - 5:00
Adult (ages 19+) Lesson: 3:30 - 4:15

REGISTRATION:
NOVEMBER 19, 2025
1:00 PM

PHONE:
250-361-0714

Limited Space Available





Impact

Planning our Evaluation

- Iterative process to develop surveys
 - Sense of belonging
 - Connection to community
 - Physical activity participation
-

Sport for Life, ICA, UVic:
Discuss key themes and wording
of questions to capture pre- and
post-participation



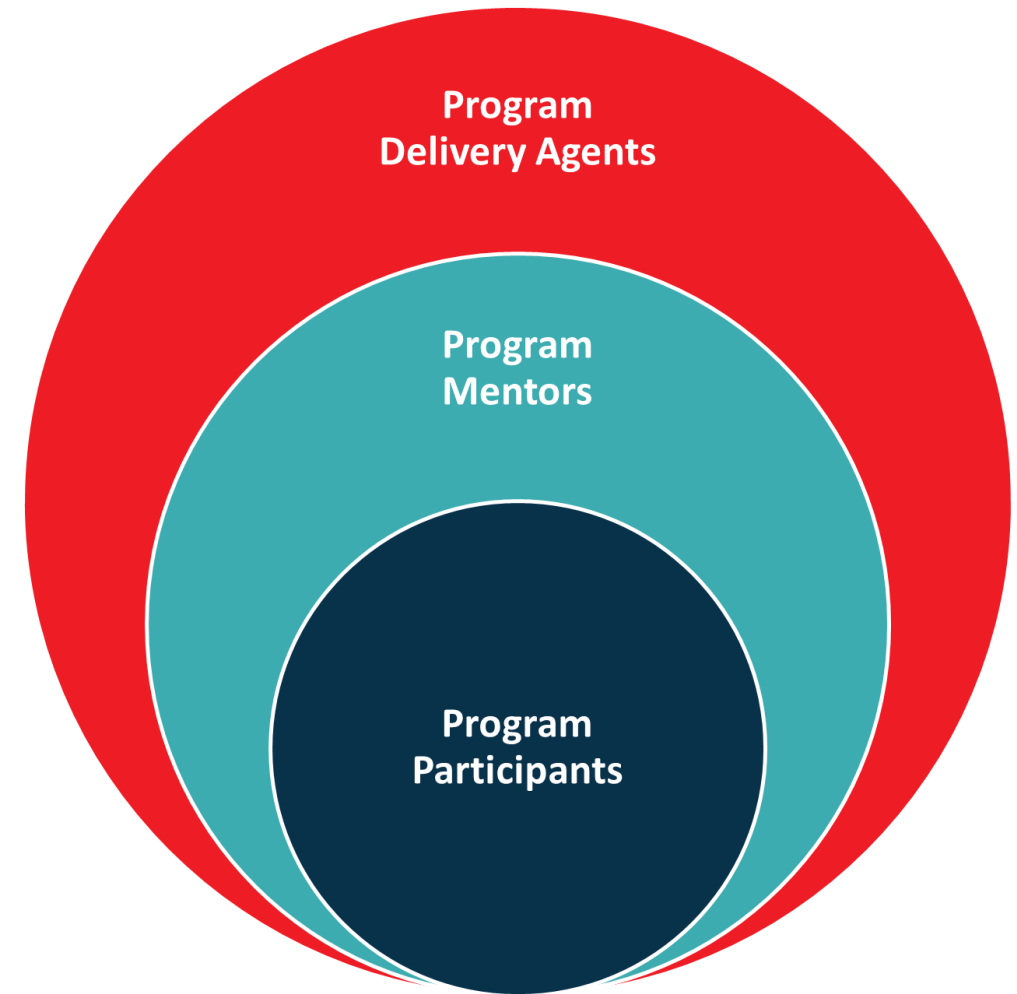
Experienced newcomers:
Review questions, provide
feedback on wording, suggest new
questions



Sport for Life, ICA, UVic:
Edit, refine, and finalize questions
to capture feedback from
experienced newcomers

Evaluation

- **Program Delivery Agents and Mentors**
 - -Success and challenges
- **Program Participants**
 - -Sense of Belonging
 - -Physical literacy



Program Mentors

Older youth who had
participated in
Wellness for
Community
Connections Training
(n=7)

Focus group in fall
2025 to learn about
their experiences with
training, mentoring
summer camp
participants

Program Mentor Focus Group Results

01

Utility of training was perceived as very high amongst mentors

02

Connecting with other mentors was a positive benefit

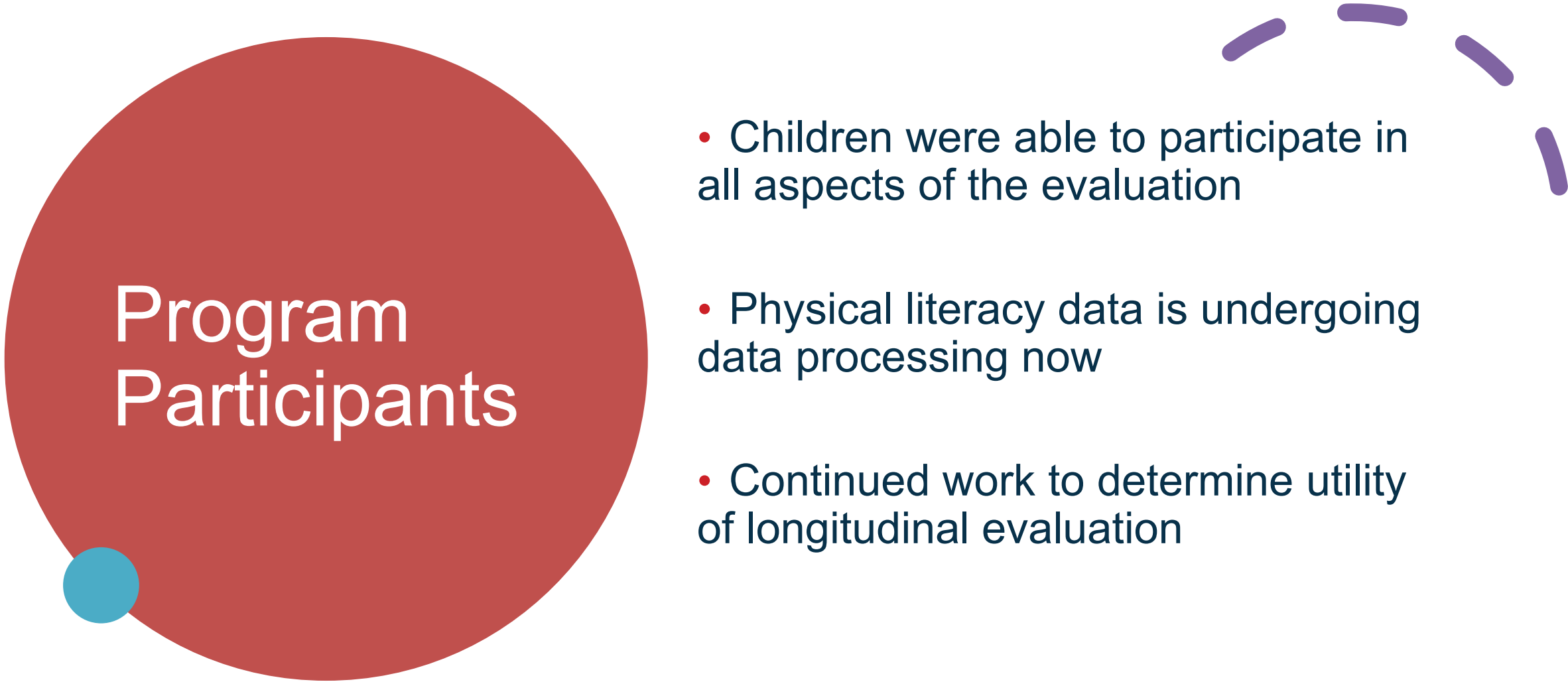
- Helped build sense of connection to community

03

Support system (ICA staff) was strong for mentors

04

Experience participating in a wide range of physical activities



Program Participants

- Children were able to participate in all aspects of the evaluation
- Physical literacy data is undergoing data processing now
- Continued work to determine utility of longitudinal evaluation



Next Steps



CO-PLAY
— NETWORK —



SCAN ME



Acknowledgements

SSHRC  CRSH

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Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada



**VICTORIA
FOUNDATION**

CONNECTING PEOPLE WHO CARE
WITH CAUSES THAT MATTER®

Questions?

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