



South African Lacrosse Association Safe Gender Equity Framework 2025–2028

Implementation Monitoring Officer: [To be appointed]

Policy Review: Lucas Monareng, President of the South Africa Lacrosse Association

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Policy Owner: The South African Lacrosse Association Executive Board

1. Vision & Purpose

The South African Lacrosse Association (SALA) believes that lacrosse can be more than a game — it can be a vehicle for belonging, pride, and empowerment, particularly for girls and women who have historically been excluded from sporting opportunities in South Africa.

In a country still navigating the deep inequalities of the past, sport can create spaces where differences in race, gender, background, and ability are not barriers but strengths. SALA's vision is for lacrosse to reflect the diversity of South Africa's people, where women and girls participate and lead equally, and where sport actively prevents violence, exploitation, and discrimination.

Our purpose is to create and sustain safe, inclusive, and empowering environments in which women and girls:

- Feel they belong and take pride in their identity, community, and achievements.
- Develop skills that improve employability, leadership, and lifelong wellbeing.
- Can play, coach, officiate, and manage without fear of harassment, abuse, or assault.

This framework translates that purpose into concrete strategies, measurable targets, and enforceable safeguards.

2. Guiding Principles

SALA's Gender Equity Framework rests on the following eight guiding principles:

1. Players First

Every decision — from scheduling to funding — must benefit the players' development, safety, and enjoyment. We design programmes around their needs, not administrative convenience.

2. **Seriously Fun, Deeply Valued**

Fun is not a luxury — it is an entry point to skill development, retention, and pride. We cultivate joy in sport while reinforcing that participation in lacrosse is meaningful and respected.

3. **Safety as a Non-Negotiable**

Prevention of violence, harassment, and sexual assault is embedded in every aspect — from coach selection to facility design. We adopt *zero tolerance* policies and actively train all personnel in safeguarding and bystander intervention.

4. **Gender Parity with Intersectionality**

We do not just aim for equal numbers — we ensure that race, socio-economic background, disability, and language are factored into equity planning.

5. **Belonging & Pride**

Sport should be a home. We will create spaces where young women and girls feel they are part of something bigger than themselves, fostering local and national pride.

6. **Sport as a Skills Incubator**

Lacrosse teaches communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, time management, and resilience — all of which are critical for employability. We will intentionally link these skills to career opportunities.

7. **Equitable Resourcing & Visibility**

Budgets, sponsorships, media coverage, and development resources must be allocated to reflect our commitment to gender equity.

8. **Accountability & Continuous Learning**

We set measurable targets, report progress, and adjust strategy based on evidence, lived experience, and community feedback.

3. Why Gender Equity in Sport Matters for South Africa

3.1 Belonging and Pride

In under-resourced communities, many girls face isolation, low self-esteem, and few opportunities to celebrate their strengths. Team sport provides a shared identity, a source of local pride, and the experience of being valued for one's contributions. Wearing a team jersey or representing a community fosters an enduring sense of worth.

3.2 Employment Skills

Through structured sport participation, girls acquire:

- **Communication skills** (on-field coordination, off-field advocacy).
- **Leadership skills** (team captaincy, peer mentoring, coaching roles).
- **Problem-solving and adaptability** (responding to changing match conditions).
- **Time management and discipline** (balancing training, school, and personal life).
We will pair these with life skills workshops on CV writing, interview preparation, and entrepreneurship.

3.3 Violence and Exploitation Prevention

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a crisis in South Africa. Sport can reduce vulnerability by:

- Providing safe spaces with trusted adults and trained coaches.
- Teaching bodily autonomy and respect for others' boundaries.
- Building networks that reduce isolation and provide support if abuse occurs.
This framework embeds prevention and survivor support in every programme layer.

4. Draft Strategic Objectives & Targets (3-Year Horizon)

1. Boost Female Participation

- Establish at least two female age-group teams per participating province within 3 years.

2. Enhance Female Leadership

- Reach 40% female representation on the SALA Executive Board within 3 years.
- Ensure women chair or co-chair key committees (development, competitions, safeguarding).

3. Develop Safe, Inclusive Pathways

- Provide gender-specific pathways from grassroots to national teams, with built-in mentoring.

- Integrate GBV prevention training into all player and coach development programmes.

4. Secure Equal Resourcing

- Ring-fence 50% of development budget for girls' and women's programmes.
- Ensure equal access to facilities, equipment, travel, and media coverage.

5. Core Actions

A. Participation & Pathways

- Partner with schools, universities, and NGOs to launch *Girls in Lacrosse* recruitment drives.
- Subsidise transport, uniforms, and equipment for players from under-resourced communities.
- Organise provincial girls' events with consistent fixtures and end-of-season championships.
- Establish Provincial high performance programmes that identifies and mentors promising female players.

B. Leadership & Governance

- Adopt a Gender Parity Charter with measurable timelines within 3 years.
- Advertise all open Board positions or Provincial committees amongst all female participants

C. Coaching & Officiating

- Introduce a Coach the Coaches – Women's Track programme with paid mentorships to help female leaders teach the future of the sport to younger women.
- Target recruitment of female officials with accelerated accreditation and practical placements.
- Offer stipends and childcare support for women to access workforce training or attend mentorships.

D. Safety & Safeguarding

- Mandatory safeguarding certification for all SALA staff and volunteers.
- Anonymous reporting channels for harassment, abuse, or discrimination.
- Facility audits to ensure private, secure changing areas for women and girls.
- Integration of Gender Based Violence prevention workshops in all community clinics.

E. Employability & Life Skills

- Link sports skills to job readiness through structured workshops via SALA partnerships.
- Offer volunteer roles within SALA for young women in admin, media, and event roles.
- Partner with employers to provide pathways from sport to employment.

F. Visibility & Recognition

- Equal promotion of men's and women's events on SALA media channels.
- Storytelling campaigns showcasing female role models from the women's national team and local clubs.
- Engage local radio and TV to broadcast women's matches.

6. Monitoring & Evaluation

- **Baseline audit** in Year 1 to measure current gender ratios, participation rates, and resource allocation.
- **Annual public report** on all KPIs:
 - Female participation %
 - Board/Provincial committee gender ratios
 - Female coach/officiating numbers
 - Budget allocations
 - GBV reports and resolution statistics

- **SALA Board review** at the end of Year 3 to inform the next strategic cycle.

7. Governance & Accountability

- The SALA Board are accountable sponsors of this framework.
- Appoint a Board member to be responsible for Gender & Inclusion policies, and to coordinate delivery and reporting.
- Build gender equity KPIs into performance internal reviews of SALA.

8. Capacity & Resources

- Budget line item for gender equity, with 50% allocated to women's programmes.
- Actively pursue grants, sponsorships, and government funding linked to gender equity.
- Train all SALA staff in inclusive leadership and trauma-informed practice.

9. Timeline

- **Months 1–6:** Baseline audit, appoint SALA Board member responsibility for gender & inclusion Officer, launch pilot leagues, full safeguarding compliance.
- **Months 6–12:** Begin leadership training, coach/officiating fellowships, GBV prevention integration.
- **Year 2-3:** Expand provincial tournaments, achieve 25% female coaches/referees, reach 30% female board.

10. Long-Term 10-Year Impact

If implemented fully, this framework will:

- Vastly improve the sense of belonging for young women in target communities.
- Create visible female leaders in lacrosse governance and coaching.
- Equip hundreds of girls with skills for life and employment.

- Establish SALA as a leader in gender equity and safety for women in South African sport.
- Improve the awareness of Gender Based Violence risk in participant communities, and through work with the communities at large, contribute to a reduction in GBV.