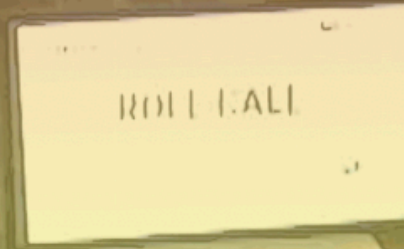


**GVAT:  
Becoming  
Greater...  
Thanks  
to you!**



Greater Victoria Acting Together

**Annual Report 2022**



Organizing on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen and WSÁN EĆ peoples.

# Mission/Purpose/Vision/Values of GVAT

GVAT works with diverse civil society organisations at the local level, doing broad-based organising to build capacity for leadership development, citizen-led action and developing relationships across the lines that often divide our communities. Our ultimate vision is to nurture the growth of varied organisations and relationships that equip families and communities to participate with power in the public decisions that impact their lives.



Our purpose is:

1. To educate the public in methods, skills, attitudes, knowledge, tactics and strategies that facilitate meaningful participation in civil society to advance the common good;
2. To educate and develop civil society leaders who are committed to advancing the common good;
3. To strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to advance shared interests.

# Overcoming Challenges- Seizing opportunities

This past year began with significant challenges for GVAT. Like many organisations, the impact of the pandemic on our work was challenging with a few member organisations not renewing their membership with GVAT.

Early in the year our increasing financial constraints unfortunately led to the difficult decision that we would be unable to continue to financially support the full time lead organiser staff position after May. We thank Chet Phillips for his work with us. Our administrative assistant Beatrice Gentili-Hiltos resigned unexpectedly, soon after. We appreciate the work Beatrice did for us under difficult conditions.

Without paid staff, volunteer leaders within GVAT stepped up to maintain stability in the organisation so that its work continued without pause. Given the financial constraints in the first half of the year, another difficult decision was suspending payment of our membership dues as an affiliate to Industrial Areas Foundation in the Pacific Northwest (IAF NW).

Available financial resources were successfully redirected to ensure the sustainability of the organisation for the remainder of the year. Thanks to our many members and supporters who generously volunteered their time, skills and resources. We couldn't have done it without you!

Together we found ways to overcome these challenges. We were spurred onward by our shared belief that GVAT, as an alliance of 24 organisations, is uniquely positioned to harness broad-based support in our community to advocate for positive changes on issues that impact people's lives in our region. By year end, with our members' support and encouragement, we were invigorated by a shared focus, and a collective renewed spirit and recommitment to our work together.



# Homes for All Community Assembly Oct 2nd

Through a listening campaign undertaken in 2021, one issue rose to prominence—the lack of affordable housing. This was identified as a crisis for many people in our region. This issue became a primary focus of our work in 2022. The Housing Action Research Team did intensive research and developed plans and strategies to mobilise GVAT and the community around this issue.

Through careful research and organising efforts, GVAT mounted a highly successful Homes for All community assembly on October 2, attracting 300 supporters, municipal politicians and members of the general public in person and many more on line. We used the opportunity of the municipal election campaigns to gain public commitments at the assembly from mayoral candidates to a municipal Homes for All policy platform that was presented with proposed actions to address housing affordability measures.

An impressive public roll call of 21 member organisations and their banners was a powerful demonstration of our collective strength. The heightened energy this generated was palpable. Several personal stories were shared by individuals about the hardships they experienced due to the lack of affordable housing. All leading candidates for mayor in Saanich, Victoria and Esquimalt were present and agreed to support the policy platform and to meet with GVAT within 100 days if elected!



# Homes for All Community Assembly Oct 2nd



Our founding assembly happened!

The strong turnout and support of the community shown at our public community assembly had us realise we were now officially and publicly launched as an alliance of organisations working together for the common good of all in our region!



# Leadership Retreat

- A leadership retreat using a structured IAF Internal Audit process at the end of January provided an opportunity for us to identify our current strengths and challenges and to consider future opportunities for GVAT.
- We identified a need to review and reconsider our relationship as an affiliate of IAF NW. This work is continuing.
- A part-time administrative assistant, Samantha Hicks, was hired in the summer to support the organisation's work, and to develop a greater profile on social media.



- In the fall, we contracted the services of Sonia Theroux, an external consultant, to develop and propose solutions to priority issues with usable resources for the immediate work ahead for GVAT. This research and engagement work was presented in an interim report in November with a final report in early 2023.

## Becoming Greater

A Handbook for



Greater Victoria Acting Together

**to Guide Planning, Decisions & Activities  
for 2023 and beyond**

*Prepared by Sonia Theroux, December 2022  
Rev 1 January 10 2023*

# Summer Social and Website Updates

GVAT held our first annual Summer Social. The potluck picnic at Beaver Lake was a great way to be together in person during Covid.



Our new External Communications Team did website improvements and upkeep, increased the quality and quantity of GVAT's social media presence and re-established a GVAT newsletter. <https://www.gvat.ca/blog>.



2022-09-12

## Newsletter from Greater Victoria Acting Together - Oct 2nd Homes for All Community Assembly

[Read More](#)



# Housing Action Research Team Highlights

Provincial budget announcements in February 2022 included an allocation of \$35 million over three years to provide additional support for youth in care transitioning into adulthood. The research and advocacy work of members of the Housing ART, including key meetings with four provincial ministers in 2021 contributed to achieving this win. More information can be found here:

<https://www.gvat.ca/blog>

Two interactive workshops were held on the housing crisis in Saanich. They informed participants about the gap between housing needs in Saanich and the available housing supply, dispelled biases against renters and residents of social housing, and invited participants to imagine truly inclusive communities. The Housing Action Research Team was instrumental in planning, preparing and organising our successful Housing for All Assembly Oct 2 (see more above).

## Climate ART Highlights

Met with the provincial Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. Transportation Sub-Committee made progress at municipal and CRD levels on a number of issues including:

- Welcoming wheelchairs and mobility scooters in AAA bike and roll lanes
- Defunding urban highway expansion and moving money to transit and active transportation
- An equity strategy for the CRD Transportation Committee
- 24/7 bus lanes on future rapid bus routes
- Having the CRD and municipalities adopt the Clean BC target to reduce vehicle kilometres by 25% by 2030

Food-Agriculture Sub-Committee:

Our first approved ASK–GVAT supports the proposed CRD Foodlands Access program,

<https://www.gvat.ca/climate-justice-campaigns/#food-agriculture>  
Forestry Sub-Committee:

- GVAT signed the United We Stand declaration (fall 2022) and participated in the related United for Growth rally (February 2023) to demonstrate broad public support for old growth protection and sustainable forestry.
- Letter writing campaign, including letters to the editor, to educate cabinet ministers and the public on the wide and far-reaching impacts of BC's poor forestry practices.



# Mental Health and Addictions ART highlights

The MH ART's research into alternate crisis response programs provided support to BC Canadian Mental Health Association in proposing a Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT) pilot program for Victoria. Research has proven community-based multi-disciplinary teams providing mental health services without prominent police presence free up first-responder resources (police, paramedic, emergency departments) and decrease negative outcomes for the people in need of assistance.

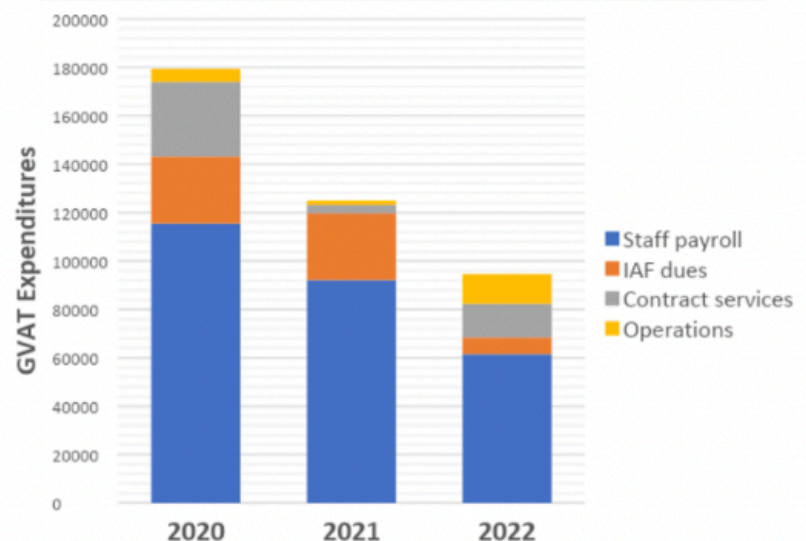
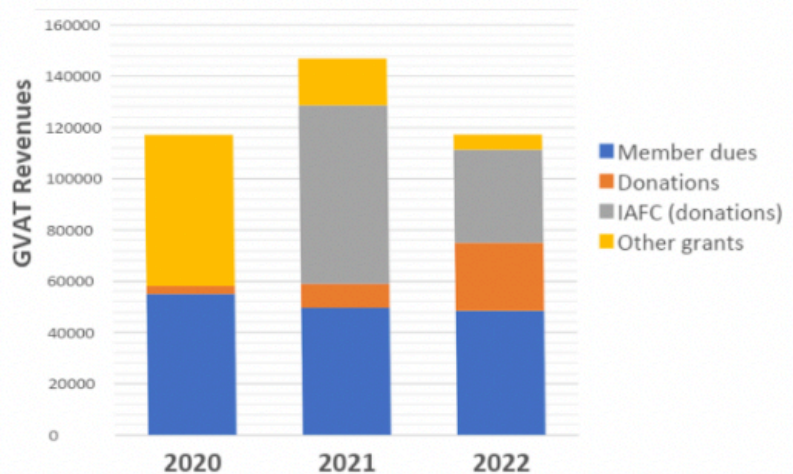
## Committee on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion ( COEDI) activities:

- A mediation team was established, focused not only on a process for the resolution of conflict but also prevention.
- Indigenous Relationships Learning Circle (Sub-Committee of COEDI) was formed in late 2022.

## GVAT financial comparisons 2020-22

In 2020, when GVAT was preparing for a major Founding Assembly that had to be cancelled during the pandemic, we had a full-time Lead Organizer and high-profile programming with contractors, so operating expenses greatly exceeded revenues. This was despite access to emergency pandemic subsidies from the federal government. In 2021 we were able to reduce expenses and to access charitable donations to IAFC that had been deferred from the previous year.

However, in 2022 our spending was again on track to exceed revenues. GVAT made the difficult decision to lay off our Lead Organizer and suspend payment of IAF dues to secure viability. As we move forward, we hope to preserve our more predictable revenues from membership dues and donations (IAFC) and develop a staffing model tailored to this revenue stream that also allows us to benefit from opportunistic but highly variable grant funding.



# Looking ahead...

In this upcoming year GVAT is moving toward “acting together” with greater clarity, community and cultural safety.

## We plan to -

- Continue the advocacy work begun to address the lack of affordable housing in our region

- Continue to implement recommendations in the consultant’s report, “Becoming Greater”. The next steps in implementation of the recommendations are to clarify our decision making process and review our mission, values and purpose.

-Develop a fresh strategic plan for GVAT

- Offer a number of training opportunities to GVAT members throughout 2023

- Maintain and/or expand staffing later in 2023 to include a possible part-time staff person to help coordinate our work

- Continue work to renew relationships with IAF NW, IAF Canada, and the network of affiliated groups. IAF is undergoing major reorganisation, and is open to new and better ways of doing things.

# Appreciation for Your Support

In this past year GVAT became stronger, and celebrated some significant milestones and successes! We couldn't have done it without YOU! It took each and every one who believes and supports the work of GVAT for us to become greater and stronger, by the end of 2022. We so deeply value your support, encouragement, and financial contributions! What we accomplished in 2022 took the solid work of our staff, and the ongoing dedication of our many volunteers and supporters who gave so generously of their time and skills towards our work together.

There is still important work ahead. And we are committed to working together with our many community partners and supporters to influence decision makers on pressing issues. We are committed to building a stronger, sustainable organisation so that our work together will make a positive, lasting difference in our communities for years to come.



**We are stronger and greater thanks to you!**

**THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**