

Special Olympics Youth Declaration

Preamble

We, Youth Leaders with and without intellectual disabilities (ID) are from across the globe. We recognize our position to create **positive impactful change in our schools, universities, and communities and empower fellow young people to become change agents**. We, Special Olympics Youth Leaders, are passionate to host awareness campaigns, collaborate on social justice activities, and implement inclusive community projects. All the work promotes the **acceptance and inclusion of all people**. However, we Youth Leaders, recognize that the future of the Unified Generation relies on us. We must activate fellow young people – from diverse cultures, territories, and backgrounds – to join us. Together, we will continue to advocate for people of all abilities to have the right to **play, learn, work, and live together**.

We, Youth Leaders with and without ID, believe that we are:

- **Champions of Change** who believe young people are a crucial component of creating sustainable and long-term impact around the world.
- **Lifelong Learners** who believe that the continued pursuit of knowledge and cultural understanding enhances social inclusion for all people around the world.
- **Advocators** who play an active role in standing up for the rights of people with and without intellectual disabilities.
- **Influencers** who demonstrate the power of inclusion everyday through our words and actions.

Together, we commit to the following actions:

Empowering Youth Leaders: We will empower fellow Youth Leaders, providing them with the necessary tools, resources, and platforms to become effective advocates for inclusion. We will support their initiatives, amplify their voices, and encourage their active participation in decision-making processes.

Promoting Awareness and Education: We will work tirelessly to raise awareness about the importance of inclusive education and its benefits for individuals with and without intellectual disabilities. We will organize campaigns, workshops, and events to educate our communities, schools, and institutions on the value of diversity, acceptance, and equal opportunities for all.

Collaborating with Educators: We will collaborate with educators to create inclusive learning environments. We will provide training and support to teachers, helping them develop inclusive teaching strategies that meet the needs of all learners. We will advocate for inclusive curricula, promoting a comprehensive understanding of disability and fostering empathy, respect, and appreciation for diversity.

Engaging Special Olympics Staff: We will actively engage with Special Olympics staff, sharing our perspectives, experiences, and ideas to enhance their programs and initiatives. We will collaborate on the development and implementation of inclusive policies and practices that promote the full participation of individuals with intellectual disabilities in all aspects of life.

Uniting Global Youth Leaders: We will forge strong connections with Global Youth Leaders, forming a unified movement for inclusive education. We will share best practices, collaborate on projects, and support one another in our efforts to create positive change in our respective communities. Together, we will amplify our impact and create a global network of inclusive youth leadership.

Empowering Families and Siblings: We will empower families and siblings of individuals with intellectual disabilities, recognizing their crucial role in promoting inclusive education. We will provide support, resources, and opportunities for them to advocate for inclusive practices and create inclusive communities.

Collaborating with Healthcare Workers: We will collaborate with healthcare workers to ensure that the specific needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities are met in healthcare settings through training and advocacy. We will promote accessible healthcare services for all people, including mental health support, and advocate for inclusive healthcare policies that prioritize the well-being and dignity of all individuals.

Collaborating with Community Leaders and Organizations: We will collaborate with community leaders and organizations to create inclusive communities that celebrate diversity and promote the inclusion of all individuals. We will actively participate in community projects, events, and initiatives that foster a sense of belonging and create opportunities for everyone to participate and contribute.

Advocating for Policy Change: We will advocate for policy change at local, national, and international levels to ensure that inclusive education is recognized as a fundamental right for all individuals. We will actively engage with policymakers, sharing our perspectives, experiences, and evidence-based research to influence policies that promote inclusive education.

Collaborating with Businesses, Media, and Civil Society: We will collaborate with businesses, media, and civil society organizations to promote inclusive practices and raise awareness about the importance of inclusive education. We will encourage businesses to create inclusive employment opportunities and media to portray individuals with intellectual disabilities in a positive and inclusive light.

Engaging the General Public: We will engage the general public, raising awareness about the value and benefits of inclusive education. We will challenge stereotypes, misconceptions, and discrimination, promoting a culture of acceptance, empathy, and equal opportunities for all.

