



**Special
Olympics**

Leadership
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Evaluation Report

Special Olympics Leadership Academy

Frankfurt, Germany

18 – 20 May 2015



Special Olympics





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Special Olympics *Leadership Academy*

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Participants

3 Program Board members (incl. 2 athlete leaders)

21 Program National Directors/ Senior Staff

3 Regional Staff

Countries

Albania

Azerbaijan

Belgium

Cyprus

Estonia

France

Germany

Greece

Hungary

Ireland

Kosovo

Liechtenstein

Luxembourg

Malta

Netherlands

Norway

Poland

Romania

Serbia

Switzerland

Turkey

Uzbekistan

Executive Summary

The second Special Olympics International Leadership Academy was held in Frankfurt, Germany on May 18 – 20 2015. The Academy is a flagship initiative at the heart of a new leadership development program for existing and emerging Special Olympics leaders around the world. Participants from 22 countries in the Europe-Eurasia Region took part in the Frankfurt Academy, along with 3 Regional staff.

Building on the first ever Special Olympics Academy held in India in December 2014, this Academy featured external facilitators from Academy partners CEB and Goldman Sachs, as well as from the German Olympic Sports Confederation. Funding was again provided thanks to American Express Foundation.

Each participant received the CEB Enterprise Leadership report, designed to help them understand more about their personal style and workplace preferences. Academy topics included leadership roles, leadership brand, strategy and change, influencing, teamwork and execution. Importantly, this Academy featured a global first as two athlete leaders, from Belgium and Norway, participated in the entire program. The lessons learned from this pilot will be invaluable in helping Special Olympics to design the best possible inclusive learning experiences as our leadership development program expands over the next few years.

Similar to the Academy in India, reaction from participants was very positive – the average overall rating of the Academy was 4.67 out of 5. They felt the Academy will help them achieve better results, and contribute to the positive development of their Program. External expertise and facilitation was particularly well received, while better advance materials and more time for action planning were the main suggested areas for future improvement.





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Background

Over the years, Special Olympics has grown and added new initiatives, creating greater demands on our leaders all over the world, including those working in the Europe-Eurasia Region. They routinely face challenges such as low awareness of Special Olympics, difficulties in reaching people with intellectual disabilities and inadequate funding. Aside from a Regional conference every two years which provides opportunities to learn and network, Special Olympics leaders in Europe Eurasia have had insufficient opportunities to develop their personal leadership skills, which would further empower them to improve their performance. The



Special Olympics Leadership Academy is a flagship initiative to help address this situation and drive high quality leadership at all levels.

Goals

The Leadership Academy is designed to drive stronger, more proactive leadership around the world. Our goals are to challenge and empower through:

- Creating leaders with vision, able to galvanize voluntary, political and government support, create and implement high quality programming, and influence others
- Infusing leaders with the inspiration and capacity to perform at a higher level and significantly enhance our global impact





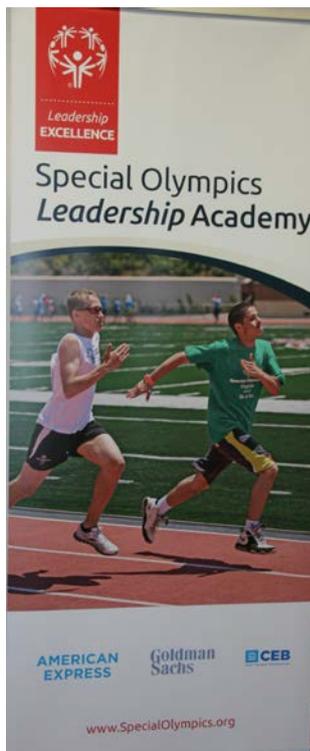
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Location and Logistics

Frankfurt, Germany, was chosen because of ease of access for participants. The Academy was held at the NH Morfelden Hotel, near Frankfurt Airport. Excellent logistics support was provided by staff from the Special Olympics Europe Eurasia Regional office, and by the staff from CEB's EMEA & Asia headquarters in the UK.

Translation was provided thanks to two volunteers – Svetlana Maksimova and Valia Vrekou – who respectively provided Russian and Greek translation throughout the Academy.



Partnership Support

The Academy was funded by a combination of American Express and Special Olympics International.

Similar to the Academy in India, course structure and content were designed in partnership with CEB and Goldman Sachs, whose experience and insights were an invaluable help with tailoring an Academy for the Europe-Eurasia audience.

Format and Syllabus

Prior to the Academy the participants completed the CEB Enterprise Leadership survey to help analyze their potential areas for improvement.

The Special Olympics leadership excellence program is based on four principles: Inform, Empower, Engage and Inspire. In keeping with these principles the Academy format was highly interactive, providing constant opportunities for dialogue, best practice sharing and reflection to enhance the learning experience. The syllabus structure was designed to focus first at an individual level and then



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explore setting direction and influencing others, particularly externally, finishing with leading a team and executing successfully. The schedule was as follows:

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
AM	Your Leadership Role	Aligning Strategy	Successful Delegation
	Enterprise Leadership	Leading Change	Inspiring your Team
PM	Network Leadership	Flexing your style	Execution Reminders and Wrap-Up
	Your Leadership "brand"	Influencing others	

Day One



The interactive approach started even as participants arrived for the first session of the Academy – they began by walking around the room to review famous leadership quotations and select a favorite. The group then took part in a session exploring leadership and what great leaders do.

The majority of Day One was facilitated by Nick Shaw, Commercial Operations Director, EMEA & Asia, CEB. Nick helped the group explore different leadership roles – transactional, transformational and network – using CEB research and CEB’s competency model. He provided an explanation of the Enterprise Leadership Report that each participant had received, after which each individual reviewed their report to identify areas for improvement.

Nick’s session concluded with a fun best practice exchange where participants shared an example from their own work that demonstrated transformational or network leadership best practice.



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Best practice sharing



Nick Shaw from CEB being presented with a token of appreciation by athlete leaders and Program Board members Stig Martin Sandvik from Norway and Micheline Van Hees from Belgium

The final session on Day One focused on the concept of a leadership brand. Participants considered what they want to be known for as a leader and what they need to do to build or enhance their leadership brand within and outside their Special Olympics Program.

 **The Big Question**
(too often unanswered)

WHAT DO YOU
WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR AS A LEADER?



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Day Two



The second day of the Academy started with a session on Strategy and Change facilitated by Gabriele Freytag and Niclas Bruns from the Leadership Academy of the Germany Olympic Sports Confederation.

They facilitated a very interactive workshop that explored how to analyze and establish strategic direction, followed by consideration of key factors involved in successful change initiatives.



At the end of the change session, the group discussed the important question of making changes to Program Boards to ensure they are kept fresh and fit for purpose.

The afternoon of Day Two was focused on behavioral styles and influencing others. Participants self-identified their primary behavioral style, and how they can 'stretch' to work well with and influence others both internally and externally.





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At the end of Day Two the group enjoyed a 'cultural evening' in Frankfurt, featuring authentic local cuisine in a traditional German restaurant.



Day Three

The main workshop on Day Three, 'Leading your Team', was facilitated by Lucy Pollard from Goldman Sachs University. Again it was a very interactive session

blending presentation with breakout groups and individual exercises to explore each topic.



Participants discussed topics such as leadership styles to use with different team members, effective delegation and improving their leadership presence.





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The final session was a brief review of key principles for successful execution.

The main topic was an 'execution matrix' which can be used to help prioritize transformational and network leadership projects and tasks ahead of more day-to-day 'transactional' leadership work.

Wrap-Up

The Academy closed with a short talk on leadership in Special Olympics by Mary Davis, President and Managing Director of Special Olympics Europe Eurasia.

This was followed by action planning where each participant reviewed the actions they had identified over the three days and refined them to ensure they were clear, impactful and measurable. They were assisted by two consultants from the CEB Frankfurt office, Marcus Rauschenbach and Ludwig Fritzsich, who provided expert guidance with this task.

As in India, during the final wrap-up participants were offered a pro bono coaching feedback session to address any questions they might have about their Enterprise Leadership report, and to help them complete the work on their action plans. Participants will complete the Academy when they submit interim and 1 year reports on what they have achieved from their action plans.

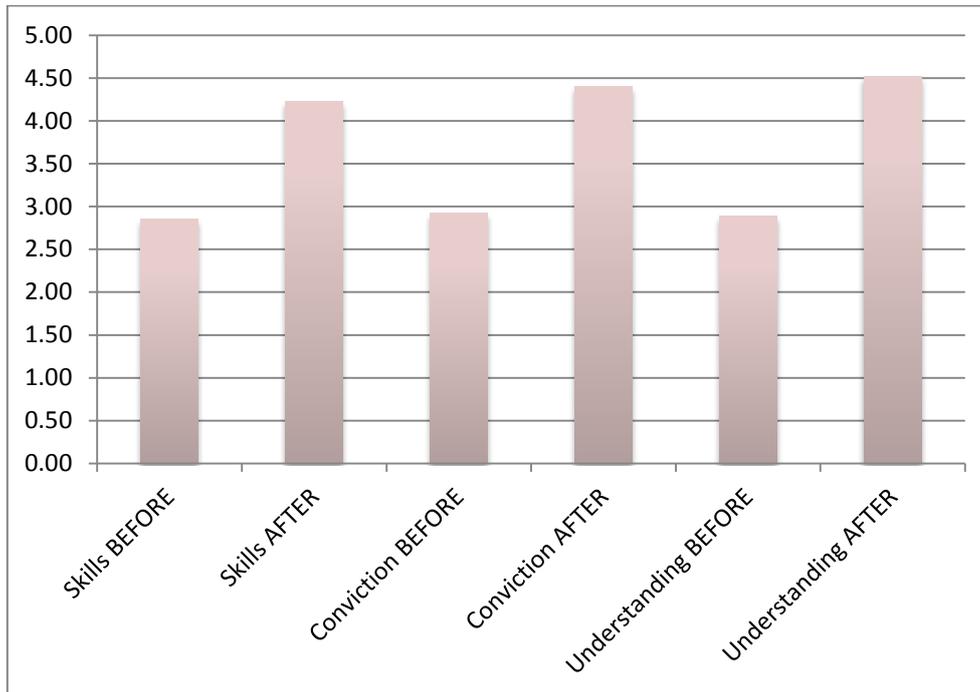


Evaluation

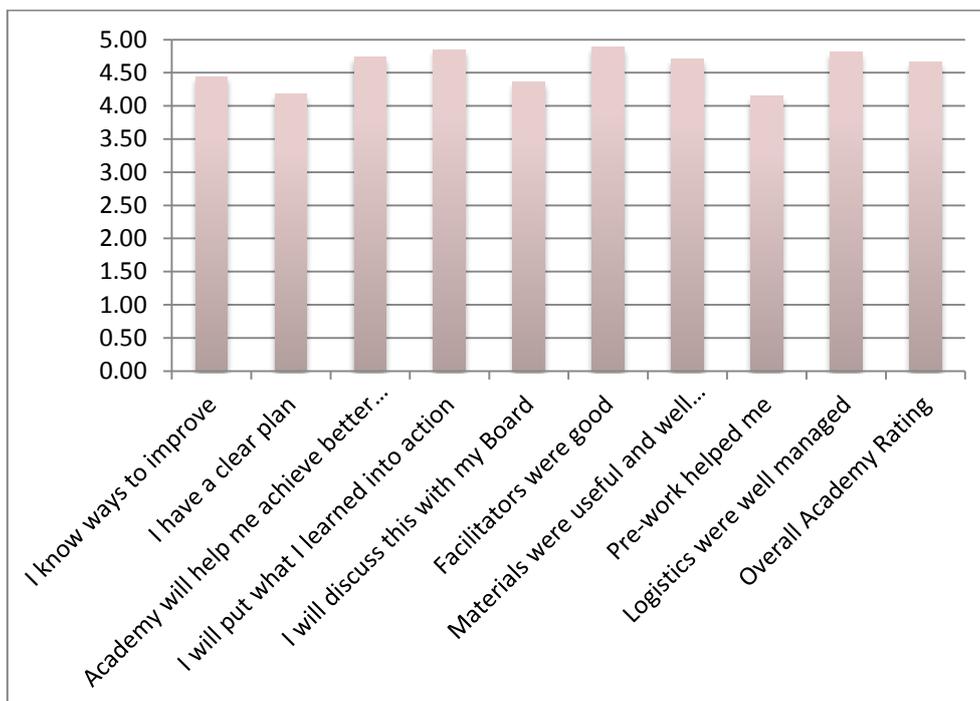
Participants completed an evaluation form at the end of the Academy to provide initial feedback on the experience. As part of this, they were asked to rate their skills, conviction and understanding before and after the Academy – positive gains were reported against each of these criteria (graph below shows average ratings).



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They were also asked to answer a range of additional questions about various aspects of the Academy and its impact on their ability to do their job, culminating in an overall rating of the Academy. The results are shown below – the average overall rating was 4.67 out of 5 from a total of 27 forms returned.





Positives

Overall the ratings were similar to those received at the end of the Academy in India, and indicate that leaders felt it was a positive experience that will help them to perform their role at a higher level. Considering the wide range of leaders, the ratings suggest that the content and format are sufficiently broad-based to suit participants whatever their experience level, background and culture.

The depth and quality of external involvement was unquestionably a significant factor in leader ratings of the experience. As with India one of the most common comments from the leaders was that they enjoyed the interactive approach and welcomed the frequent opportunities to interact both with each other and with the facilitators through exercises and groupwork.

Translation support worked well and definitely helped the Greek and Azerbaijani participants to get the maximum value from the Academy.

Areas for Improvement and Follow-Up

Many of the participants indicated in the survey that the Academy should be a regular event, and that above all it should not be a 'one-off'. Their feedback was that follow-on Academies should be both a refresher and should cover new topics such as intuition and emotional intelligence, decision-making processes, perceptions and cultural differences, communication and leader attributes.

In terms of timing, there was some feedback that more time was needed, and perhaps a day could be added with fewer hours on each day. Specifically there was not enough time for the action planning section at the end. There were a number of suggestions that it would be good to ask participant leaders with specific expertise to share their experiences and help the group solve common problems.

One major area of learning was involvement of athlete leaders as participants. Feedback from the athlete leaders was that more advance preparation time is needed, and that it would work better if they participated in certain sessions each day but not each full day. Some of the content was appropriate, while some would need to be tailored to ensure it works well for future athlete leader participants. Overall, there was strong support for inclusion of athlete leaders at future Academies.

Finally, an off-site teambuilding activity linked to Academy content (e.g. behavioral styles), more pre-work sent in advance, and translation of all materials were additional individual suggestions provided in the evaluations.



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“Believe it or not since I came back from Frankfurt I feel different in a good way all the time. I'm trying to tell my friends about what I learned and what a good experience I had there. Now I'm thinking differently, in a fresh way, about the development of leadership skills and our organization.”

Drita Dushi –Parduzi, National Director, SO Kosovo



“Please allow me once again to thank SOEE for arranging such a well-organized academy and an excellent learning experience that was provided for all of us”

Mehmet Civelek, Board Chair, SO Turkey



“It was well organized, good structure and very informative! I learned a lot.”

Ragna Schapendonk, National Director, Special Olympics Nederland



“Thanks for the great Academy. I really appreciate the three days in Frankfurt. In the next weeks and month we are working at how to adapt and implement the new strategy and also how we get better organized for our operational business... There will also be an action plan and I can use all the experience from the Academy.”

Bruno Barth, National Director, SO Switzerland



“Thank you again for the quality of the Leadership Academy! It has been most useful to me. I have learnt a lot from the workshops and the interactions with my colleagues. And I think we all had a great time working on the future of our programs.”

Nathalie DALLET-FEVRE, Directrice Générale, SO France



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“This was a great opportunity and experience for me, the agenda was very interesting, interactive and inspiring.”

Sabine Menke, SOEE Regional Staff



“I would like to express that was very informative and worthwhile. There were many topics covered during the workshop and all the presenters did an outstanding job of sharing their expertise with us.

It was a great group and the enthusiasm and positive spirit helped make our time together both productive and fun. Thank you for your comments and suggestions during the Academy and I assure you that I have started implementing my action plan.”

Artemis Vassilikopoulou, Director, SO Hellas

