



AFRICA REGION
**ANNUAL
REPORT
2017**

*Revealing the
Champion in All of Us*

Special Olympics



“When you attend a Special Olympics Games... and watch the sheer joy on faces - not just of the athletes, but more overwhelmingly among spectators - you begin to realize there is much more at work than simply athletic competition. On one hand, it is the story of years of tragedy transformed into pure joy, driven by the beauty of sheer effort. But at the same time, it is a profound statement of inclusion - that everybody matters, everybody counts, every life has value, and every person has worth.”

Nelson Mandela

Former President of South Africa and Icon of Freedom



SPECIAL OLYMPICS



1968 - 2018



Message from the President & Managing Director

In 2017, the Africa Region experienced a year of significant growth, as displayed from data and supporting activities in contained this report.

With a solid foundation and outstanding legacy left by Dr. John Dow, Jr., former President and Managing Director of the Africa Region, the Africa Region took advantage and solidified this foundation.

The area of focus that the Region prioritized in 2017 was delivering the Special Olympics Founder's mission and vision.

'Everything we do must ultimately benefit Special Olympics athletes - if not, it does not make it on the Region's priority list.'

With this as a guide, we continued to offer quality and relevant service.

With leadership development at the top of the Regional priority list, the Africa Region hosted its largest ever Leadership Conference, attracting 90 delegates, held from 24-28 April, 2017. *Read more on Page 30 - Building Leadership.*

Prior to the conference, for the first time ever, a total of eight Regional Programs attended and

featured Floor Hockey, Floorball, Figure Skating and Speed Skating teams at the Special Olympics World Winter Games held in Austria from 14-25 March 2017, doubling Regional participation. *Read more on Page 28 - Games & Competition.*

Additional high level leadership training, the Leadership Academy, was held on 11-14 September, hosted by Special Olympics Zambia, in Lusaka.

This Leadership Academy attracted relevant Regional leaders that provide hands-on service to their local Special Olympics Programs and to those that provide day-to-day support to Special Olympics Programs across the Region. *Read more on Page 30 - Building Leadership.*

Dr. Clement Chileshe, a member of the Africa Leadership Council (ALC) and Vice Chair of Special Olympics Zambia, was elected to serve on the Special Olympics International Board of Directors.

The ALC, chaired by Advocate Misan Eresanara, member of the Special Olympics Nigeria Board

of Directors, provided useful support to the Africa Region.

The Africa Athlete Input Council worked very closely with the Regional staff in determining the most critical deliverables that were relevant and benefited the majority of athletes in the Region.

The Region continued to emphasize on athlete growth, considering that some of the Africa Region countries have no Special Olympics presence yet.

The Democratic Republic of Congo and The Gambia were the newest countries to come on board, receiving Founding Committee status.

In order to reach more athletes, expansion in existing accredited countries was encouraged in areas that had low and no Special Olympics presence, such as the refugee camps of Nyarugusu and Mtendeli, in remote western Tanzania. *Read more on Page 14 - Power to Transform Lives.*

In preparation for the Special Olympics 50th Anniversary

celebrations, two very high level dignitaries from the Africa Region were appointed as Champions for the Region.

In September 2017, Her Excellency Mrs. Esther Lungu, First Lady of the Republic of Zambia, was appointed to serve as the Africa Region 50th Anniversary Ambassador, and acclaimed football legend Didier Drogba, was appointed to serve as Special Olympics Global Ambassador. *Read more on Page 32.*

In 2017, the Africa Region reached a total of 289,909 Special Olympics participants, offered 14,479 competitions and reached a total of 25,596 Special Olympics coaches. Programs in the Region collectively conducted approximately 40 competitions per day.

We are glad to report that there has been a significant increase in the provision of service to Special Olympics athletes around the Africa Region, and we extend our gratitude to Africa Region Accredited Program leadership, Athletes and Athlete Leaders, Family Members, Volunteers, Youth and Youth Leaders, Governments, Partners, other Special Olympics Regions, Special Olympics Departments, Headquarters and the entire Special Olympics staff and senior leadership for the support rendered to the Africa Region in 2017.

Thank you!



Charles Nyambe
Regional President and Managing Director, Africa Region

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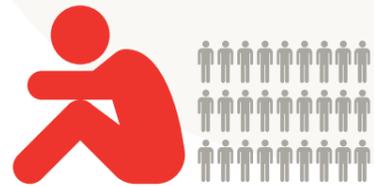
On the Cover:
Khady Guèye and Seynabou Sène go for gold in the 800m sprint at the Special Olympics Senegal National Games, held at Leopold Sedar Senghor Stadium, Dakar. *Read more on Games & Competition on Page 28.*



The 'A Very Special Christmas' albums, created by world renowned musical artists, producers and A&M Records, has donated over \$75 million to Special Olympics Programs from the Christmas Records Trust.

Africa Region

OVERVIEW



The population of sub-Saharan Africa is almost 1 billion people. According to World Health Organization estimates, this means there could be as many as 30 million adults and children with intellectual disabilities that deserve equal opportunity to reach their potential on the playing field, and in life.



HEALTH PROGRAMS



HEALTHY ATHLETE SCREENINGS
22,933



NUMBER OF CLINICAL AND STUDENT VOLUNTEERS TRAINED
2,920

2017 Reach Report

ATHLETES

254,635
UNIFIED PARTNERS
35,274
TOTAL
289,909



COMPETITIONS

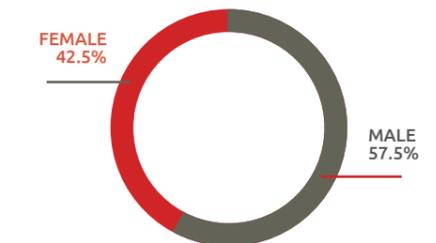


14,479

6,570 UNIFIED SPORTS COMPETITIONS



COACHES
25,596



SCHOOLS



NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ENGAGED IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS
5,888



NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ENGAGED IN UNIFIED SPORTS
1,941

HEALTH PROGRAMS



RECOGNIZED PROGRAMS
4

PROGRAMS IN PROGRESS
5



FAMILY HEALTH FORUMS
30

Mission

To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

We are helping to make the world a better, healthier and more joyful place - one athlete, one volunteer, one family member at a time.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES

Athletes are the heart of Special Olympics. They find success, joy and friendship as part of their global community. The goal of Special Olympics is to transform the lives of the almost 200 million people around the world with intellectual disabilities.

The right to play on any playing field? You have earned it. The right to study in any school? You have earned it. The right to hold a job? You have earned it. The days of segregation and separation are over!

Eunice Kennedy Shriver
Founder, Special Olympics



Their world is opened with acceptance and understanding. They become confident and empowered by their accomplishments.

Through sports, Special Olympics athletes are seeing themselves for their abilities, not disabilities.

They are also making new friends, as part of the most inclusive community on the planet - a global community that is growing every day.

The 5.2 million Special Olympics athletes - ages 8 years old and up - are registered from 174 countries.



5.2 million

Special Olympics Athletes



8 years and up

Special Olympics Athletes Age Group



Such is the mission of Special Olympics - not just to give millions of people the chance to play, to be healthy, and to belong, but to show the entire world a new way of building the future.

Tim Shriver
Chairman, Special Olympics



Changing the World Through Sports

From Disability to Ability, from Isolation to Inclusion – that’s the transformative power of Special Olympics.

Since 1968, Special Olympics has witnessed how sports can change everything in the lives of children and adults with intellectual disabilities. It shifts the focus from disability to ability, from isolation to inclusion.

Changing the typical reality of daily exclusion and humiliation, we enable Special Olympics athletes to experience a different reality – an inclusive environment where they are valued and respected, giving them the confidence to maximize their potential through training and equal ability competition.

More than 90% of people with intellectual disabilities who participate in Special Olympics sport activities increase their physical and emotional well-being. Training sessions become the source of social inclusion, through friendships with fellow athletes and with people without intellectual disabilities.

Research commissioned by Special Olympics has displayed that many people around the world underestimate the potential and abilities of people with intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics sports not only helps to change perceptions:

it creates an opportunity to improve self-esteem and social inclusion.

We want Special Olympics athletes to be fit and healthy, master skills, and build confidence and self-reliance.

IMPROVING ATHLETE PERFORMANCE

Special Olympics aims to combine high quality sports with a wide audience and be a driving force for social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. For us, this means people of all abilities are welcomed in their communities and join with others to learn, work, compete and play with the same rights and opportunities as others.

In 2017, the Special Olympics Africa Region increased its reach by recruiting 19,786 new athletes, a level of growth which translated into an 8% increase.

In addition, the Special Olympics Africa Region programs trained 2,876 new coaches, creating a total increase of 13% and improving our ratio of coaches to athletes to 1:10.



19,768

Number of New Athletes Reached (8% increase)



2,876

Number of New Coaches Trained (13% increase)



289,909

Number of Athletes



25,596

Number of Coaches



14,479

Number of Competitions



Unified Sports®

Special Olympics Unified Sports® is our most powerful tool in building a more inclusive future.

Special Olympics Unified Sports® brings people with and without intellectual disabilities with equal ability levels together on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle – training and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.

Through inclusive equal ability team sports and shared competition experiences, athletes with and without intellectual disabilities experience a new understanding, dispelling negative attitudes about intellectual disability and also impacting their respective family members, friends, and the community at large to change their opinions of and behaviors towards people with intellectual disabilities.

Research on Unified Sports® has found that Special Olympics athletes experience improved social competence and social inclusion in their communities, while decreasing negative behaviors.

The Africa Region has recorded 95% of Programs offering Unified Sports.

PLAYING UNIFIED, LIVING UNIFIED: NIGERIA

Special Olympics Nigeria started the Unified Sports initiative by combining equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes and athletes without intellectual

disabilities (called Unified Partners) on sports teams for training and competition.

This wasn't easy. Harmful practices and beliefs based on religion and culture have made people unwilling to associate with persons with disabilities.

But by matching athletes and Unified partners in year-round sports activities such as bocce, basketball, football and floor hockey, they've seen sports practice and competition improve their physical fitness, sharpen their skills and help to overcome prejudices about intellectual disability.

FROM EXCLUSION TO THE WORLD STAGE WITH NBA CARES: COTE D'IVOIRE

The sixth annual NBA Cares Unified Basketball Game was held during All Star Weekend, featuring Special Olympics athletes from around the world playing alongside NBA and WNBA legends!

Franck Koffi made the journey from his neighborhood courts in Yopougon, Abidjan to New Orleans! Franck was selected to represent the Africa Region from Special Olympics Côte d'Ivoire. The NBA All-Star Weekend is an ideal platform for Special Olympics to demonstrate the power of sports to unite people everywhere.



Photo by Ben Solomon

Some of the NBA's finest, like Dikembe Mutombo and Andre Drummond, played Unified at this big event. Franck's team also took home the win, with him scoring East team's 3rd point! Back home in Côte d'Ivoire, Franck is now highly respected for his achievements and perceived differently.



Thanks to support from ESPN, the Global Presenting Sponsor of Unified Sports, Special Olympics has recruited more than 1.4 million Unified teammates around the globe.



Photo by Ben Solomon



Power to Transform Lives

We believe people with intellectual disabilities must no longer be a hidden population.

Meet Malaki. He lives in one of the most remote parts of the world, a place called Zone 2, Nyarugusu Camp. Located in western Tanzania, this is one of the largest and most infamous refugee camps of the 21st century, with around 150,000 inhabitants from Burundi.

Malaki was chained by his mother in their dwelling hut, with a padlock around his ankle. Without the resources to manage his disability, and completely isolated from supportive services, she chose a chain as a desperate form of social protection. Alone in the dark, he would have stayed this way for the rest of his life.

Special Olympics board member Nils Kastberg visited the camp and heard about Malaki from local religious leaders, and brought this to the attention of the Region.

Special Olympics Tanzania's first task was to release Malaki from bondage. After discussions, Malaki's mother agreed to hand the chain and padlock over to Special Olympics Tanzania.

Through education, Malaki's

mother learned about the talents of children with intellectual disabilities. Through sports, Malaki learned valuable lessons and social skills. His future is brighter.



Malaki's story inspired Special Olympics to gain access to the refugee camp and invite other individuals with and without intellectual disabilities to play Unified Sports. They recruited and trained 30 volunteer coaches in Malaki's community.

Lions Club International provided sports equipment, and built football and athletics play



253

Number of Athletes in Refugee Camps

grounds in the camp, the first the local children had seen. Special Olympics also held a Family Health Forum to improve understanding about intellectual disability and the power of sport within the community.

Through inclusive team sports and competition experiences, athletes and partners develop a new understanding, also impacting their respective family members, friends, and the community at large to change their opinions of and behaviors towards people with intellectual disabilities.



Thanks to support from Lions Club International, the Global Partner of Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes®, our partnership since 2001 has expanded under the banner of 'Mission Inclusion', offering inclusive development through service to the global population of people with intellectual disabilities, and reaching thousands more.

FROM CHAINS TO THE WORLD GAMES

Once training and competition was underway, Malaki's football team from Zone 2 got the chance to compete at the Special Olympics Tanzania National Games at the Uhuru National Stadium in Dar es Salaam. This was the first time many of them had ever left the borders of the camp.

Uhuru means 'freedom' in Swahili, and the stadium provided the perfect setting for Malaki and his teammates to leave the shadows of the camp and play freely with their peers.

Five athletes from Nyarugusu Camp, including Malaki, are training to represent Special Olympics Tanzania at the next Special Olympics World Summer Games in 2019 in Abu Dhabi.

Research on Unified Sports® suggests that Special Olympics athletes experience improved social competence and social inclusion in their communities.

Today, in Nyarugusu, children with and without intellectual disabilities can play, learn and interact in ways that every parent hopes for. So far, 30 coaches have been trained, 51 family members have been educated, and 253 individuals with intellectual disabilities have been recruited in Zone 2.

The Africa Region continues reaching out to places where athletes are most in need. Who knows how many more individuals like Malaki are living in isolation all around the Africa Region, waiting for their chains to be broken ... through the power of sport?

Photos: Athletics competition in Mtendeli Camp, a changed Malaki at National Games in Dar es Salaam January 2018, and Malaki first found in chains in June 2016.



Athlete Leadership

Special Olympics is a movement from, and not just for, athletes.

Every day, Special Olympics is working towards creating an inclusive world that celebrates people of all abilities. And every day, Special Olympics' top priority is empowering people, with and without intellectual disabilities, to carry this mission into the future.

The Special Olympics Athlete Leadership program allows athletes to explore opportunities for greater participation in our movement beyond sports. Athlete Leaders put their talents to work as volunteers, coaches, fundraisers, staff, Board Members and spokespersons. They are teaching the world the true meaning of inclusion.



Athletes lead the way as the voices of the movement, educating the world about the potential of people with intellectual disabilities and driving the Special Olympics movement forward with their insights and contributions.

ATHLETE INPUT COUNCIL

The Athlete Input Council serves as the voice of people

with intellectual disabilities in the Africa Region, and provides feedback on policies that affect Special Olympics athletes.

The Africa Region representatives serving for the last 5 years include:

- Millicent Akoth, Special Olympics Kenya
- Thabo Mabuwa, Special Olympics South Africa
- Jimmy Masina, Special Olympics South Africa
- Deon Namiseb, Special Olympics Namibia
- Brightfield Shadi, Special Olympics Botswana & Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger
- Theo Tebele, Special Olympics Botswana

BREAKING RECORDS AT WORLD GAMES

Special Olympics Africa featured the only athlete official at the 2017 World Winter Games in Austria, Nhlanhla "Jimmy" Masina. Jimmy is qualified at the highest level as both a football and floor hockey official for Special Olympics. These Games were the fifth World Games Jimmy officiated. Idaho in 2009, Athens in 2011, Pyeongchang in 2013 and Los Angeles in 2015.

The first ever longest event he officiated, which was the floor hockey finals match between Iran and Bangladesh, broke the

Special Olympics floor hockey record as the longest match ever! The grueling 3-hour match, the equivalent of 2.5 full games, was experienced by two outstanding sides held in a 0-0 deadlock for the gold. Refusing to quit, eventually a draw had to be declared by the officials for safety reasons.

In Jimmy's words, "My biggest memory is in the perseverance and focus of the athletes, and the dedication of the coaches. None of the teams were ready to quit, they were destined to go to the very end!"

It's precisely this kind of grit, perseverance and belief in a better future that makes our athletes such powerful leaders.



746

Number of Athlete Leaders Africa Region

I want to help others build up confidence and accept who they are - just like I did.

I was a zero, now I'm a hero!

Brightfield Shadi

Special Olympics Botswana athlete & Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger, 2014 - 2018



Young Athletes

The future of inclusion is very bright! Young Athletes is for children with and without intellectual disabilities aged two to seven, designed for long term impact that accelerates their development.

Starting early to improve motor skills, cognitive, social and emotional development are key factors for future health and growth.

Special Olympics Young Athlete uses a sports play program to introduce children to the world of physical activity, to develop essential motor skills and hand-eye coordination. A Special Olympics study suggests that after two months of participation in Young Athletes, children with intellectual disabilities experienced a seven-month gain in motor skills. Participants improved motor skills at twice the rate compared to children who did not participate.

An example of an Athlete Leader deciding to use the sports and social skills she received to become a Young Athletes coach herself has been hired from Special Olympics Uganda.

FROM ATHLETE, TO LEADER, TO COACH, TO PARENT

Stories of transformation and dignity do not get much better than Florence Nabayinda's personal journey.

When she was a toddler in Uganda, her mother abandoned her due to her disability. She suffered physical abuse from her immediate family members. Her school teachers called her as "useless" and "unteachable", forcing her to quit school.

But Florence could run. When an uncle introduced her to Special Olympics, she trained hard. In 1997 at the Special Olympics Uganda Games, she won a gold medal, the first of many more to come. Through running, Florence found her voice.

Since then, Florence became a powerful advocate and voice for the voiceless as an Athlete Leader.

She later served as a Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger.

Today Florence is passionate about the Young Athletes program as a committed coach, as she knows firsthand what it is like to be neglected.

From working with children that the world has tossed aside, she has been motivated to become a mother to first one, and then two of her abandoned Young Athletes, giving them the home, love and support every child deserves.



For more than 15 years, Toys "R" Us and the Toys "R" Us Children's Fund together have supported Special Olympics and the littlest athletes, primarily through grant funding to advance the Young Athletes Program.





Special Olympics Health

People with intellectual disabilities are often denied access to quality healthcare. This population frequently faces isolation, intolerance and injustice in their everyday lives.

An athlete performs at her or his best when she or he is healthy and fit. However, people with intellectual disabilities are some of the largest medically underserved groups in the world, often having a higher prevalence of adverse health conditions, inadequate attention to health care needs, and inadequate access to quality health care services.

Special Olympics seeks to improve athlete health and fitness through various initiatives to support participation in both sport and society.

The Special Olympics Health Strategy 2016-2020 focuses on ameliorating health disparities so as to achieve inclusive health, whereby persons with intellectual disabilities are fully included in health systems. Inclusive health is defined here as the inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities in mainstream health services, programming, policies and laws, and training/education programs.

Special Olympics seeks to improve athlete health to support participation in both sport and society. To do this, we help athletes, families and coaches improve fitness and general health through our Health initiatives.

TOWARDS GLOBAL INCLUSIVE HEALTH: KENYA

Community activities can help encourage acceptance of children with intellectual disabilities, when stigma is broken down by positive parenting education and Family Support Networks. The impact of this in Kenya is crucial.

Special Olympics Kenya's IDEA project - Intellectual Disability Empowerment Agenda - is made possible by the vital support of Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

"Some mothers are left by their husbands after the birth of a child with an intellectual disability, or ignored by their neighbors," explains community health volunteer Luciah Karimi.

The inclusive IDEA program includes physiotherapy and health screenings, and children are referred for further medical treatment through other partners.



Physiotherapist Dennis Ombese loves seeing children achieving milestones, such as two who started walking without support for the first time. Through therapy, almost all of them have achieved neck control and the ability to sit.

"When I first brought Damacklin here, she could not walk at all," says her mother. "Now she can walk and play without support, and I can even begin looking for work while she goes to school."



CRS is a longstanding partner of the Special Olympics Africa Region, including the flagship IDEA project, pictured on these two pages. The program includes positive parenting, Family Support Networks, and health education and physiotherapy as part of Early Childhood Development.





Fit Feet

Podiatric screenings for ankles, feet, lower extremity biomechanics and proper shoe and sock gear



FUNFitness

Screenings for flexibility, muscle strength, balance and ongoing health needs



Health Promotion

Raising awareness about healthy living and lifestyle choices to improve and maintain good health and sports performance



Healthy Hearing

Hearing screenings and monitoring ear health



MedFest®

Sports physicals to compete in Special Olympics events



Special Olympics-Lions Club International Opening Eyes®

Eye assessments and provision of prescription eyewear, sunglasses and sports goggles



Special Smiles®

Dental screenings, personal oral hygiene instruction, provision of sport mouth guards and fluoride varnish



Strong Minds

Positive coping strategies and teaching the importance of emotional wellness



Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®



Special Olympics Healthy Athletes provides people with intellectual disabilities with free health screenings, health education and links to follow up care, if needed.

We train volunteer health professionals on best practices for providing care to people with intellectual disabilities in their own communities.

Special Olympics has provided more than 2.1 million free health screenings in over 135 countries.

Through initiatives like Healthy Athletes, Special Olympics operates the world's largest public health program for people with intellectual disabilities, many of whom have never before seen a medical professional in their life.

In many cases, it profoundly changed – or saved – their lives.

Photo: Special Olympics Namibia's floor hockey team sign up for their Healthy Hearing screenings at the World Winter Games 2017 in Austria.



22,933

Number of Healthy Athlete Screenings

“People with intellectual disabilities are still one of the largest groups of underserved individuals in health care, but we’re making progress helping them to get access to quality care - by raising awareness, educating more health care providers to be able to care for them, and developing relationships with key partners, such as health care systems, universities and government agencies.”

Tom Golisano
Founder, Golisano Foundation

FOUNDATION
Golisano
Imagine the possibilities!

Healthy Communities

To help athletes achieve their best both on and off of the field, and building on Healthy Athletes screenings, the Healthy Communities initiative works to expand access to year-round quality health, wellness and fitness services, opportunities, health education and resources for people with intellectual disabilities.

These efforts also include building health partnerships and strengthening follow up health care opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities.



- SPECIAL OLYMPICS SOUTH AFRICA
- SPECIAL OLYMPICS UGANDA
- SPECIAL OLYMPICS SENEGAL
- SPECIAL OLYMPICS MAURITIUS



4

Number of Recognized Healthy Community Programs



2,920

Number of Clinical and Student Volunteers Trained

Family Health Forums

Often serving as an entry point for health awareness and education, Special Olympics hosts Family Health Forums. These forums engage athletes and their families/caregivers and provide access to health information and resources.

They convene health experts, community leaders and social service providers who offer health education. 30 Family Health Forums were held in the

Africa Region last year. According to Healthy Communities research, 4,074 family members were involved in ongoing wellness opportunities in participating countries, with the overall number higher.

Forum topics included discussions about locally relevant and critical topics, such as cholera prevention, HIV/AIDS awareness, hygiene, fitness and wellness, and malaria prevention.

Fitness



Increasing range of motion and flexibility in the Special Olympics Zambia Finish Line fitness program.



Special Olympics Botswana trained 7 athlete leaders to be aerobics instructors, with the support of a Finish Line grant.

Fitness is a critical component contributing to athletes' healthy lifestyle and sports performance. This includes weight, flexibility, strength and balance.

Over the course of 2017, more than ten Programs in the Africa Region led fitness initiatives. Several of these activities were based on fitness models developed by Special Olympics:

- **Fit Families** is a program for athletes and their families/friends to get healthy and active together.
- **Unified Sports Fitness Club** is a program that offers Unified physical activity through walking sessions.
- **Sofit** is a Unified project that promotes physical activity while also teaching about holistic wellness.



Athlete Leader Yannick Tano shares his experience at a Family Health Forum at the Complexe Socio Educatif de Koumassi with Special Olympics Côte d'Ivoire, also broadcast on community radio.

BOOSTING FITNESS WITH FINISH LINE: BOTSWANA

One success story is from Special Olympics Botswana, at which a Finish Line Fitness Innovation grant empowered seven Athlete Leaders to become aerobics instructors!

Tshepo Kgatwane (29) is now able to offer fitness classes at the new community centre of Kweneng District, where there are no other gym or fitness facilities. With no equipment, they innovate and use surplus building bricks as step platforms. Tshepo works part time as a teaching assistant, coach and carer for the profoundly disabled at his former school.

Special Olympics aims to empower athletes to serve as fitness and health messengers in their communities.



Sharp Goalie Now With Sharper Vision

The goalkeeper of Special Olympics Kenya's Floor Hockey team helped keep them on top of their division. But no one knew he had cataracts.

Lawrence Mwangi, 16 years old, hails from Muthengera Primary Special School in Laikipia County, a remote part of Kenya's Great Rift Valley. Lawrence was diagnosed with having cataracts in a Special Olympics Lions Club International Opening Eyes screening at the 2017 World Winter Games in Austria.

The great news was that Lawrence could receive free surgery for his condition at the Lions SightFirst Eye Hospital in his nation's capital, Nairobi.

This specialist institution provides high quality clinical services, including education, rehabilitation and rural community outreach, and is recognized as the leading and biggest eye hospital in the East Africa region. Special Olympics Kenya and Lions Club International have a strong national partnership.



Photo by Will Schermerhorn

Dr. Solomon Asacha, a Special Olympics Opening Eyes clinician trained at the 2015 Los Angeles World Summer Games, treated Lawrence at the Lions Sight First Hospital.

GROWING INTO A CHAMPION

Lawrence only grew into the champion he is now since joining Special Olympics Kenya. When his mother discovered he had an intellectual disability, she was devastated and could not stop blaming herself. This affected Lawrence, and he did not know if he was good at anything.

But through Special Olympics sports, he discovered he had athletic talent and was a team player with a specialty in goalkeeping.

"We are delighted that Lawrence was on the Special Olympics Floor Hockey team that travelled

to Austria, otherwise we would have never known our son had a cataract in one of his eyes."

"He would complain of difficulties reading at school and when doing his chores at home, but we didn't know it was due to his eyesight," said his parents Michael and Rahab Mwangi.

PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY EYE CARE

Since 2001, Special Olympics and Lions Clubs International have been providing high quality eye care for people with intellectual disabilities worldwide. The gift of sight has been received many times through Opening Eyes.

Through 'Mission Inclusion', Lions Club International is becoming the most inclusive service club organization in the world, making eye care available to athletes like Lawrence in Africa and all over the world.



Thanks to support from Lions Club International, the Global Partner of Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes®, our partnership since 2001 has expanded under the banner of 'Mission Inclusion', offering inclusive development through service to the global population of people with intellectual disabilities, and reaching thousands more.



Photo by Will Schermerhorn





Photo by Alan Lim

“From world to local levels, Games and competition are the primary Special Olympics vehicle to drive positive attitudes, attracting live and virtual audiences to witness and experience the power and joy of sport.”

Global Strategic Plan
2016-2020



Games and Competition

Every year, Special Olympics holds more than 103,000 competitions and events around the world, plus World Summer or Winter Games alternating every two years.

Throughout 2017, millions of athletes were training and competing in our 32+ Special Olympics summer and winter sports – all around the world.

In 2017, Special Olympics issued a global call - inviting everyone to experience our world: where abilities are celebrated, where people of all ages and cultures play and live unified, and where the spirit of joy and unity prevail!

Thousands took up this offer to join the 2017 World Winter Games in Graz, Schladming and Ramsau, Austria.

From 14 - 25 March 2017, Special Olympics welcomed government, business and sports leaders, celebrities, fans and families from all over the world.

Hundreds of Africa Region athletes took part, and the Region has seen huge growth in Winter Sports at these Games. The four sports were floorball, floor hockey, figure skating and speed skating.

7 Special Olympics Africa Region Programs competed at the World Winter Games in 2017:

- Special Olympics Burkina Faso
- Special Olympics Cote d'Ivoire
- Special Olympics Kenya
- Special Olympics Namibia
- Special Olympics Nigeria
- Special Olympics South Africa
- Special Olympics Uganda

The 2019 World Summer Games, will take place in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in March 2019. These will be the first Special Olympics World Games to be held in the Middle East.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS
**WORLD
GAMES**
ABU DHABI 2019



الأولمبياد الخاص
**الألعاب
العالمية**
أبو ظبي 2019

Building Leadership

The Africa Region has always held leadership development in advancing the Special Olympics mission. This investment in leadership has built strong programming in the Africa Region.

With a total of 90 delegates in attendance, the 2017 Africa Leadership Conference was held from 24-28 April. This conference had the largest number of delegates ever, as it included a full day Athlete Leadership Congress and Youth Activation workshop. 19 Athlete Leaders from across the Africa Region attended to discuss important issues of leadership.

The conference was held under the theme: "Building Inclusive Communities".

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

With representatives from 20 African countries, the Special Olympics Africa Leadership Academy took place 11-14 September at the Olympic Youth Development Centre in Lusaka, Zambia.

Notable speakers at the Academy included:

- Her Excellency Esther Lungu, First Lady of Zambia

- Her Excellency Dr Maureen Mwanawasa, Former First Lady of Zambia
- Hon. Moses Mawere, Minister of Youth, Sport and Child Development, Zambia
- Hon. Given Lubinda, Minister of Justice, Zambia
- Ambassador Luis Gallegos, United Nations Permanent Representative, Vice President of the Human Rights Council and Special Olympics International Board Member

The Special Olympics Leadership Academy is designed to improve impact and performance of leaders around the world through support, training and mentoring. Academy participants engage in face-to-face workshops, e-learning and ongoing support for professional goals.

"The more you learn, the more responsibility comes your way," said Brightfield Shadi, Botswana's International Global Messenger to the local media in Zambia.

The Academy was made possible by support from the American Express Foundation, Goldman Sachs, CEB and SkillSoft.

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

Charles Nyambe
President and Managing Director,
Africa Region

Jimmy Masina
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PIONEER PARTNER

The 'A Very Special Christmas' albums, created by world renowned musical artists, producers and A&M Records, launched the first album in 1987. In 2017, over \$3 million was allocated by the Christmas Records Trust to support Program Development and fund Christmas Record Grants. These grants were used to recruit athletes, train coaches, host competitions, and expand athlete and partner participation in Unified Sports. Since 1998, over \$70 million has been given to Special Olympics Programs from the Christmas Records Trust.



Special Olympics Ambassadors

Special Olympics is changing the world and many are getting on board!

All over the world, ambassadors from the world of sports, entertainment and music are helping bring awareness to the important work of Special Olympics.

FIRST LADY OF ZAMBIA

The Africa Region was proud to announce that Her Excellency Esther Lungu, First Lady of the Republic of Zambia, accepted the role of 50th Anniversary Ambassador for the Africa Region on 12 September, 2017.

In recognition of her support for people with intellectual disabilities, and as an acceptance gesture, Mrs. Lungu was unveiled by Zambian Minister of Youth, Sport and Child Development, Honorable Mr Moses Mawere and Africa Region President and Managing Director Mr Charles Nyambe during the 2017 Africa Leadership Academy, with representatives from 20 Special Olympics Africa countries in attendance.

Speaking during the ceremony at the Olympic Youth Development Centre, Mrs Lungu said: "My passion for persons with disabilities is not new to me. It is in my DNA, and what I have been doing even before I stepped into my current role as First Lady. I will immediately incorporate this task as one of the four pillars of

the Esther Lungu Foundation Trust for inclusion of persons with disabilities."

DIDIER DROGBA, FOOTBALL ICON

Didier Drogba, one of the greatest football legends in the world, was officially brought on as Special Olympics' newest Global Ambassador in 2017.

During his acceptance speech, Drogba said he was honored to be on board as a Global Ambassador for Special Olympics. He will use this role to help build a more inclusive world for everyone.

He is excited to support the expansion of Unified Sports, build Unified Schools, and create Unified Communities in Arizona and in his home country of Côte d'Ivoire, in Africa, and around the world.

He committed to attending the Chicago 50th Anniversary Celebration in July 2018 and the 2019 World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi.

"I am honored to be selected as Special Olympics Global Ambassador," Drogba shared. "In addition to our common passion for sport and being a positive force of change in societies, I want to contribute in helping Africa and the world by sharing my experiences."

Drogba's soccer career continues as the first player-owner of the Phoenix Rising of the United Soccer League. Drogba remains committed to his philanthropic work, including the Didier Drogba Foundation, which provides financial and material support in both health and education to the African people. The Foundation opened its first school this year in the town of Pokou-Kouamekro.

In respect of his humanitarian actions, the 2010 Time magazine issue included Drogba in its list of the 100 most influential people in the world.

Special Olympics and Drogba will work together to promote the development of Special Olympics programs that strive towards creating continuous opportunities and empowerment for people with intellectual disabilities, leading to a more inclusive society for all.



Didier Drogba in his home country with Special Olympics Côte d'Ivoire, sharing the love of sports at a Unified Football tournament in 2012.

'The world would be a better place if children [with intellectual disabilities] can live out their dreams and contribute to society through their many talents.'

Her Excellency Esther Lungu

First Lady, Republic of Zambia



Africa Region Programs



Special Olympics Benin

FOUNDED IN 1992
Languages: French, Fon
Athletes and Unified teammates: 2,119
Coaches: 396
Competitions: 65
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Family Health Forum, Young Athletes, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Botswana

FOUNDED IN 1988
Languages: Setswana, English
Athletes and Unified teammates: 6,493
Coaches: 760
Competitions: 1,025
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Family Health Forum, Fitness, Youth Activation, Young Athletes, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Burkina Faso

FOUNDED IN 1991
Languages: French, Mooré, Fulfuldé, Dioula
Athletes and Unified teammates: 2,593
Coaches: 164
Competitions: 800
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Healthy Athletes, Family Health Forum, Young Athletes, Youth Activation, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Côte d'Ivoire

FOUNDED IN 1992
Languages: French
Athletes and Unified teammates: 15,878
Coaches: 1,225
Competitions: 1,025
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Family Health Forum, Fitness, Young Athletes, Youth Activation, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Democratic Republic of the Congo

FOUNDED IN 2017
Languages: French
FOUNDING COMMITTEE



Special Olympics Gambia

FOUNDED IN 2017
Languages: English, French
FOUNDING COMMITTEE

Africa Region Programs



Special Olympics Ghana

FOUNDED IN 1978
Languages: English, Twi (Akan), Ewe, Ga, Dagbani
Athletes and Unified teammates: 10,82
Coaches: 536
Competitions: 800
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Family Health Forum, Fitness, Healthy Athletes, Young Athletes, Youth Activation, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Kenya

FOUNDED IN 1978
Languages: English, Swahili, others
Athletes and Unified teammates: 63,645
Coaches: 7,021
Competitions: 1,224
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Healthy Athletes, Healthy Communities, Family Health Forums, Family Support Network, Fitness, Young Athletes, Youth Activation, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Malawi

FOUNDED IN 1999
Languages: English, Chichewa
Athletes and Unified teammates: 18,196
Coaches: 826
Competitions: 2,535
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Family Health Forums, Fitness, Healthy Athletes, Young Athletes, Athlete Leadership, Youth Activation, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Mali

FOUNDED IN 1993, RE-FOUNDED 2013
Languages: English, Bambara
Athletes and Unified teammates: 1,724
Coaches: 214
Competitions: 28
Other Programs: Family Health Forum, Young Athletes, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Mauritius

FOUNDED IN 1997
Languages: English, Creole, French
Athletes and Unified teammates: 3,569
Coaches: 357
Competitions: 52
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Family Health Forums, Healthy Athletes, Healthy Communities, Young Athletes, Youth Activation, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Namibia

FOUNDED IN 1999, REFOUNDED IN 2017
Languages: English, 13 local languages
FOUNDING COMMITTEE



Africa Region Programs



Special Olympics Nigeria

FOUNDED IN 2005
Languages: English, 13 local languages
Athletes and Unified teammates: 23,779
Coaches: 1,066
Competitions: 1,042
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Healthy Athletes, Healthy Communities, Family Health Forums, Young Athletes, Youth Activation, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Rwanda

FOUNDED IN 2003
Languages: English, French, Kinyarwanda
Athletes and Unified teammates: 18,505
Coaches: 1,220
Competitions: 990
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Family Health Forums, Family Support Network, Healthy Athletes, Healthy Communities, Young Athletes, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Sénégal

FOUNDED IN 1990'S, RE-FOUNDED IN 2009
Languages: French, Wolof
Athletes and Unified teammates: 3,485
Coaches: 651
Competitions: 75
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Family Health Forum, Healthy Athletes, Healthy Communities, Young Athletes, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Seychelles

FOUNDED IN 1986
Languages: French and Wolof
Athletes and Unified teammates: 223
Coaches: 33
Competitions: 23
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Young Athletes, Unified Schools



Special Olympics South Africa

FOUNDED IN 1991
Languages: English, isiZulu, seSotho, Afrikaans
Athletes and Unified teammates: 46,956
Coaches: 3,302
Competitions: 2,326
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Healthy Athletes, Healthy Communities, Family Health Forums, Family Support Network, Fitness, Young Athletes, Youth Activation, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Swaziland

FOUNDED IN 2001
Languages: Siswati, English
Athletes and Unified teammates: 10,535
Coaches: 857
Competitions: 180
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Family Health Forum, Family Support Network, Healthy Athletes, Young Athletes, Unified Schools



Africa Region Programs



Special Olympics Tanzania

FOUNDED IN 1987
Languages: English, Swahili, local languages
Athletes and Unified teammates: 23,571
Coaches: 2,910
Competitions: 1,501
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Family Health Forum, Healthy Athletes, Healthy Communities, Unified Sports, Young Athletes, Youth Activation, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Togo

FOUNDED IN 1999
Languages: French, Ewe, Kabia, Mina
Athletes and Unified teammates: 8,275
Coaches: 830
Competitions: 818
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Family Health Forum, Young Athletes, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Uganda

FOUNDED IN 1991
Languages: English, Luganda, Swahili
Athletes and Unified teammates: 14,934
Coaches: 1,280
Competitions: 513
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Healthy Athletes, Healthy Communities, Family Health Forums, Families, Fitness, Young Athletes, Unified Schools, Youth Activation



Special Olympics Zambia

FOUNDED IN 2001
Athletes and Unified teammates: 2,415
Coaches: 188
Competitions: 500
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Family Health Forums, Fitness, Healthy Athletes, Young Athletes, Unified Sports, Youth Activation, Unified Schools



Special Olympics Zimbabwe

FOUNDED IN 1987
Languages: English, Shona, Ndebele
Athletes and Unified teammates: 12,192
Coaches: 1,760
Competitions: 415
Other Programs: Athlete Leadership, Family Health Forums, Fitness, Young Athletes, Youth Activation, Unified Schools



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Africa Region Programs





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