



# Global Strategic Plan 2016-2020

**Special Olympics**







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*The full set of resources for our 2016 – 2020 Global Plan can be found at [resources.specialolympics.org](https://resources.specialolympics.org)*



## Introduction

Welcome to the new 5-year global strategic plan for Special Olympics. If we are to have maximum impact, all members, partners and supporters of Special Olympics will need to focus on the targets in this plan and work together to achieve them.

A flexible approach will be used to implement and measure the plan successfully in different ways around the world, recognizing that societies, and access to resources and technology, vary greatly. There are a number of important roles that will bring success over the next five years:

- **at the local community level**, we ask everyone involved to develop and adapt day-to-day Special Olympics activities in ways that achieve the goals in this plan
- **at the Special Olympics Program level**, knowing that 'one size does not fit all' and recognizing economic and cultural differences, we ask our Program leaders to implement each of the strategies in this plan using creative approaches that work best in their country or state
- **at Special Olympics International (SOI)**, we will do everything we can to support our Programs and develop Special Olympics using this plan as our roadmap

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Local Community Level

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Special Olympics Program Level

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Special Olympics International (SOI)

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## Section 1

### Our Movement Today

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**The mission of Special Olympics is 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.**

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**Our Mission is as relevant today as it was almost 50 years ago when Special Olympics was founded.** Sport is still the primary way Special Olympics achieves change, supported by work in health which has become critical to our mission. A lot of progress has been made in recent years. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the WHO World Report on Disability have helped to change views of people with disabilities as objects of charity to viewing them as equal members of society who should be as self-reliant as possible.

Special Olympics has made a big contribution to this change. Through providing opportunities for almost 5 million athletes in 170 countries, Special Olympics actively promotes the UNCRPD principle of “full and effective participation and inclusion in society” by:





- Enabling athletes to master skills that increase confidence and ability to succeed in life
- Highlighting and addressing massive disparities in access to sport, schooling and health care for people with ID
- Increasing families' knowledge and expectations of what athletes can achieve
- Changing attitudes to create inclusion in schools, communities and society at large

However, despite progress, **people with ID still face stigma, discrimination, social isolation and injustice every day of their lives.** They are routinely ignored or excluded by society, and in many cultures little or no value is placed on their worth or abilities. As examples from our research, only 44% of people in one country believed that people with ID could engage in a simple conversation, while many countries do not even gather data on intellectual disability. The situation is made more challenging because so many people all over the world, with and without ID, live in poverty in countries with weak economies and poor social welfare systems.

**At the core, Special Olympics is a sports organization that uses the power of sport as a catalyst for social change.** As Nelson Mandela said, *"Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does... Sport can create hope, where once there was only despair... It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination."*

Through sport, we challenge society. By highlighting how the needs of people with ID are not being met, we expose inequity and exclusion. By drawing attention to the gifts of people with ID, we break down misperceptions and tackle negative attitudes. **The focus for Special Olympics therefore needs to be on both providing a high quality sports experience and engaging key influencers and communities with that experience in ways that help create positive attitudes and bring about permanent change towards inclusion of people with ID.**

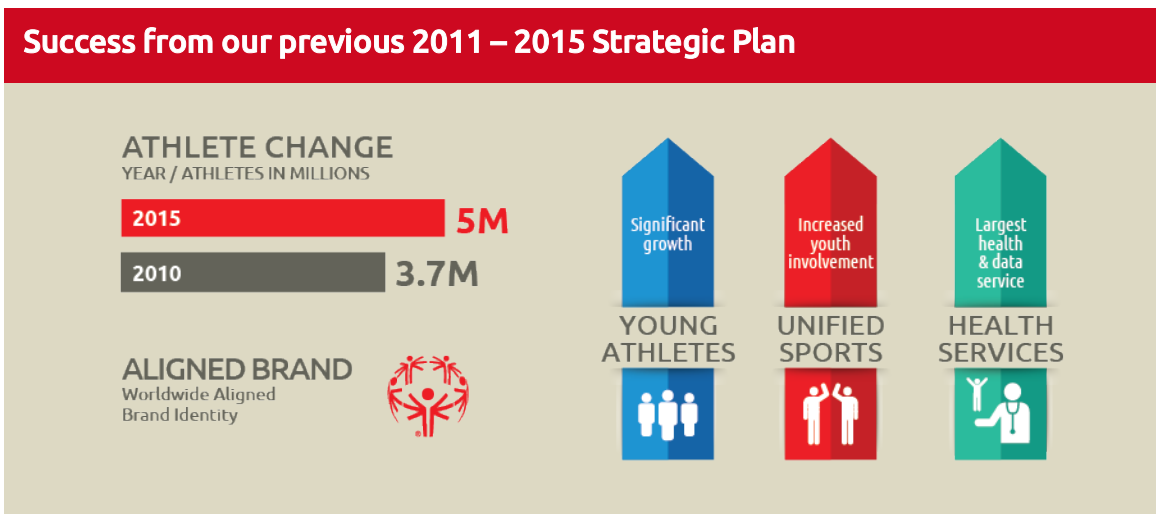
While Special Olympics has made a tremendous impact, **we clearly have much more to do if the 200 million people with ID in the world are to be fully included in communities.** Ours is an urgent mission, and we must continue to provide opportunities that enable everyone to embrace people with ID as full members of society. When we do that, we show the world that there are millions of different abilities, not disabilities.

In the words of a Unified sports partner in Lebanon: *"What do you mean? What differences? We are all human -- this is what matters."*



## Progress & Challenges

Special Olympics has an incredible number of hard-working volunteers who are the engine of our movement. Together we achieved success in many aspects of our last 5-year strategic plan. During that time, Special Olympics grew from 3.7 million to 5 million athletes and united behind a common set of goals and brand identity. We made major progress with programs such as Unified Sports, which joins people with and without disabilities on the same sports team, and this helped us increase youth involvement. Our Young Athletes program, which provides early childhood development for 2–7 year olds, grew significantly, and Special Olympics is now the largest single source of health services and data on people with ID in the world. However, we fell significantly short of our goals related to raising funds and expanding athlete leadership.



During consultations to develop this Plan, a number of significant challenges emerged:

- People with ID still face enormous stigma and ignorance. They are often an invisible population, whose worth is unknown to governments, influencers and society at large. Most do not attend school at all, which limits their access to sport and social inclusion.
- At all levels, more resources are needed for priorities that have the most impact
- We have experienced rapid growth and added new, highly impactful programs, but they are not yet implemented as widely or effectively as they could be
- While cultural differences across our organization bring rich diversity, they make it hard to leverage our potential power as a movement
- Most of our athletes are in poorer health than the general population, with undiagnosed conditions that impact their fitness, quality of life and life spans
- Awareness of Special Olympics still needs to be increased so people with ID, their families and wider societies understand the opportunity we bring
- Having reached 5 million of up to 200 million people with ID, there are many we still need to reach, especially in developing countries



## Section 2

### Our Vision, Goals and Strategies

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**Our vision is that sport will open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities and create inclusive communities all over the world**

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Special Olympics will strive for this vision by providing better quality sports opportunities, supported through health initiatives. At the same time, we will step up efforts to use our work to 'tell the world' about the talents and abilities of people with ID. According to research, over half of people who have personal contact with someone with intellectual disabilities are more accepting and positive<sup>1</sup>. When we combine high quality sports with a wider audience, and connect more people with our athletes, it changes attitudes.

What Special Olympics ultimately seeks is to be a driving force for social inclusion. For us, this means people with ID 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. To do all of this, we need Special Olympics athletes, families, volunteers and supporters to reach out to others in their communities, encouraging millions of new people to experience how Special Olympics brings out the best in everyone.

## GOALS

Special Olympics has two major five-year goals. They are completely connected, and reaching both goals, not one or the other, is critical to achieving the vision.



### **Goal 1: Improve opportunities for athletes to perform at their best**

Special Olympics will improve the quality of programs, and broaden access to them. This means strengthening our focus on sports programming, supported by our health work, so that athletes are fit and healthy, master skills, build confidence and self-reliance and perform at their best on and off the field. As we do this, Special Olympics will use its expertise to be a leader on how to achieve inclusion in and through sport, and improve access to the effective programs we have, more than creating new ones.

Athletes will have increased, year-round opportunities to participate, and improved quality will help us attract new athletes. Special Olympics will also seek targeted growth, especially in places where our presence is low.

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<sup>1</sup> The Shriver Report Snapshot: Insight into Intellectual Disabilities in the 21st Century, July 2015





## **Goal 2: Build positive attitudes towards people with ID**

Attitude change must be a deliberate outcome of Special Olympics. We create change from others engaging with and witnessing our athletes as they participate in sports. It is essential that Special Olympics continuously works to improve awareness of what people with ID can achieve. We need people to see our athletes competing, and athletes leading the way as the face and voice of our movement; that is what opens hearts and minds and ultimately promotes inclusion in friendships, communities, health, education and jobs.

To achieve our major goals, an important support goal underpins this plan:

### **Support Goal: Build capacity by improving resources and leadership**

Securing adequate resources is vital to the success of Special Olympics over the next five years. The aim is to align existing and new partners with our strategies, and combine increased resources with dynamic leadership to deliver the best possible impact for people with ID.

In addition, we will integrate athletes, families and young people as we implement every aspect of this plan, especially in leadership roles, to ensure success:



#### **Athletes**

If we want the world to be inclusive, Special Olympics athletes can and should contribute in ways beyond the sports field. This means involving athletes as volunteers, as coaches, as officials, as fundraisers, as staff, as Board members. It means developing more athlete leaders, and ensuring they are actively engaged in meaningful roles at all levels. When we do that we will learn from our athletes, and they in turn will teach the world the true meaning of inclusion.



#### **Families**

The families of Special Olympics athletes are critical to this plan. They understand the meaning and benefits of inclusion, and provide a critical voice we need to move our priorities forward. Special Olympics needs to engage more family members in new ways, for example becoming volunteers, supporting home exercise, helping to raise more resources, and telling their stories.



#### **Youth**

Young people with and without ID are important because they are the future of Special Olympics. They also are more open to inclusion – they understand and embrace it. They bring the creativity and energy we need to change the world. To be successful, Special Olympics needs to create systems for engaging young people beyond youth to lifetime involvement. We also need to reach young people in new ways and engage them in our vision and goals.



## STRATEGIES



### To Improve Athlete Performance, Special Olympics will:



#### A. Improve the quality of sports programming

- Set higher expectations for everyone, and emphasize coaching as key to high quality
- Focus on schools/disability service organizations, universities/colleges and at community level through Special Olympics 'clubs' and mainstream sports clubs
- Develop fit, skillful athletes who are prepared to compete and improve performance
- Promote a year-round approach that includes more training and local competitions
- Establish partnerships at all levels to support sports programming



#### B. Increase inclusion through Unified Sports and Young Athletes, particularly in schools, and through expanding to new areas

- Increase access to Unified Sports for all age groups but especially in schools
- Create flexible ways to expand the Special Olympics Young Athletes program
- Continue to grow, especially in developing countries where access to programs is low



#### C. Grow our health program to support athlete participation in sport and society

- Help athletes, families and coaches to improve athletes' fitness and general health through expansion of our Healthy Athletes and Healthy Communities initiatives
- Work with governments, non-governmental organizations, universities and the private sector to encourage them to provide better healthcare for people with ID



## To Build Positive Attitudes, Special Olympics will:



### **D. Improve external awareness through PR, celebrities and government engagement**

- Work with media, social media, governments, the international development community, and celebrities to promote the Special Olympics mission
- Highlight athletes' talents, and use athlete leaders as the voice of our movement
- Adapt our message to ensure that far more people hear about, take part in or watch our activities from local communities to the global stage



### **E. Connect the movement so we harness our power and speak with a collective voice**

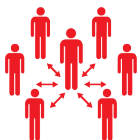
- Use the latest technology to gather data on Special Olympics members – athletes, families, volunteers, etc. – so we can improve communication and coordination
- Share messages so members can communicate externally in a consistent way
- Create opportunities for athletes and families to tell their stories and challenge their communities to see people with ID differently and appreciate their talents.



### **F. Maximize external impact of Games and competitions to showcase athletes' abilities**

- Improve how Games and competitions are run to deliver a great athlete experience
- From world to local levels, promote games and competitions as the primary Special Olympics vehicle to highlight athlete abilities and develop positive attitudes
- Attract live and virtual audiences to witness and experience the transformative power and joy of sport

## To Build Capacity Special Olympics will:



### **Generate more resources**

- Increase corporate partnerships, refine and expand digital fundraising, and enhance our global development work, in particular through partnerships
- Improve collaborative fundraising between SOI and Programs

### **Strengthen leadership, including athlete leadership**

- Continue to develop athlete, youth and Program leaders using both dedicated and inclusive approaches, and improve Program quality
- Ensure athlete and youth leaders get opportunities to lead at every level





## 2016 – 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW





## Improving Athlete Performance



### A. Improve the quality of sports programming

#### The Challenge

Special Olympics has grown dramatically and launched many new initiatives over the past decade. These programs are high impact and widely embraced; however, the focus on new programs has led to inconsistent quality and attention to sports. We also need to embrace digital technology to modernize our sports programming.

#### What we will do and why

Special Olympics will emphasize coaching as the key to high quality sports participation. We will strengthen coach recruitment and educate coaches and families on progression from fitness and skill development to competition. Our aim is to be a leader in sports programming, using enhanced guidance materials and digital technology to support and set high expectations of all athletes, coaches and officials.

This means providing more training at the local program level, beyond the minimum “8-week” approach, to support year-round, life-long fitness for athletes. It also means improving key sports practices as much as possible – enhancing skills, using the best available equipment and facilities, increasing knowledge of sports rules, and ensuring regular, high quality local competitions.

We want athletes, coaches, families and volunteers focused on performance improvement so that athletes reach their highest potential and show what they can achieve. This includes activities for athletes with higher or profound needs, such as the Motor Activities Training Program. We will also focus on retaining athletes through the quality of their Special Olympics experience.

#### How we will do it

- 1) Strengthen sports programming and coaching to improve and increase opportunities in three local Special Olympics program settings – schools/disability service organizations, universities/colleges, and community-based activity such as Special Olympics ‘clubs’ or integration with mainstream clubs.
- 2) Promote year-round, life-long fitness and involvement through family recruitment and education, digital and online tools and new resources for sport practice, at-home training, local competitions and community activity.
- 3) Enhance our position as an authentic sports organization through new partnerships with organizations which support sports programming, such as National and International Sports Governing bodies, to share expert resources and gain access to funding and education programs for coaches and officials.

#### Roles

Local: Increase quality/frequency of training/practice/competition, promote fitness  
 Programs: Support improvement at local level, improve coaching, expand partnerships  
 SOI: Provide new coaching and fitness materials, establish new global partnerships

#### Global Plan Targets

- 50% of athletes averaging 2 high quality sports opportunities per week
- 50% of athletes with a yearly sports improvement goal (skills, fitness or performance)
- 25% of Programs with a system to track retention of athletes
- 100,000 coaches achieving new certification or re-certification



## Improving Athlete Performance



### B. Increase inclusion through Unified Sports and Young Athletes, particularly in schools, and through expanding to new areas

#### The Challenge

Special Olympics has highly effective programs but they are not available to many people with ID and quality is uneven around the world. Young Athletes and Unified Sports programs are at an early stage in many places. We need to continually define best practices while allowing for regional differences, and educate everyone about the impact of these programs and how to implement them successfully.

#### What we will do and why

We have a unique opportunity to expand our work in schools and start building towards the long term aim that every school will someday offer Unified Sports. Unified Sports create inclusion, allow us to be a leader in universal access to sport, attract new athletes with and without ID and attract new donors. We want Unified Sports available as an optional choice for all athletes, both in youth and adulthood. We will focus at the local level on schools because we know it works – 84% of students involved in our Project UNIFY school program said it was a positive turning point in their lives. We will also grow Unified Sports in colleges and universities.

The Special Olympics Young Athletes program promotes lifelong opportunities for inclusion and encourages fitness from an early age. Research documents the success of this program in developing motor skills, school readiness and family support. As an entry point into our sports programs, it is the key to the 'next generation' of athletes. We will refine this program and expand it through existing and new approaches in education environments and local communities.

We will reach out to find new athletes through our traditional, Unified and Young Athletes programs. We will do this in a manageable way by targeting places we have a low presence, such as major urban centers and the developing world.

#### How we will do it

- 1) Increase the number of schools, colleges, universities, local sports clubs and youth organizations participating in Unified Sports. This will help find new people and resources, increase training and competition, and provide greater visibility. This includes evolving from "Project UNIFY" to global expansion in "Unified Schools" – schools that engage in Unified Sports and foster a uniquely open, inclusive education environment. We will also improve Unified Sports rules and guidance to enhance consistency.
- 2) Grow Young Athletes, allowing for flexibility to deliver the core program in different ways while providing greater technical and material resources to Programs around the world.
- 3) Increase our presence in cities and areas where our presence is minimal to create new communities of acceptance everywhere.

#### Roles

Local: Seek new links with schools and sports clubs, start/expand Young Athletes Programs; Expand and improve Unified/Young Athletes, set up new local programs  
SOI: Improve Unified/Young Athletes guidance/materials, support Program expansion

#### Global Plan Targets

- 10% improvement in acceptance where Unified Sports/Young Athletes take place
- 10,000 Unified Schools (schools that engage in Unified Sports)
- 1 million new athletes (including Unified partners and Young Athletes)





## Improving Athlete Performance



### C. Grow our health program to support athlete participation in sport and society

#### The Challenge

Special Olympics' health work has shown that people with ID are consistently left out of health systems that are ill-equipped to diagnose and treat them. This leads to massive inequities – much shorter life spans, severe pain and inability to fully participate in society. And it directly impedes our vision of inclusion through sport, as any athlete needs to be healthy to compete at their best. Data indicate that 60.2% of adult Special Olympics athletes are obese or overweight, 22.4% of have never had an eye exam, 14.4% have mouth pain and 26.4% fail hearing screenings.

#### What we will do and why

All strong sports programs focus on the health and fitness of their athletes to enable them to compete at their best. Athletes who can finally see the ball clearly, hear their coach properly or are no longer overweight can compete to their full potential. We will expand our health programs to continue addressing these and other needs, working with partners and health care systems to put more emphasis on follow up treatment, create much greater access to health care for our athletes, and directly contribute to our mission of developing physical fitness and supporting active participation in sports and society.

#### How we will do it

- 1) Work with athletes, families, coaches, health care providers, communities and local programs to grow Healthy Athletes and Healthy Communities by:
  - expanding and stewarding partnerships to provide follow up care
  - integrating fitness and wellness opportunities
  - improving use of digital technology
  - generating support for inclusive sport activities and health work
- 2) Partner to increase access to health services by:
  - engaging Governments to raise awareness and resources, and advocating for changes that provide for the health of all citizens
  - developing partnerships with international organizations, NGOs, foundations and corporations to ensure their programming is inclusive of people with ID and increase resources for Special Olympics
  - working with universities to improve curricula, health volunteering opportunities and continuing education
- 3) Support the expansion of inclusive health/fitness/sport programming by:
  - educating institutional/organizational leaders
  - creating materials for ongoing leadership education
  - stimulating innovation (e.g. focusing on mental health)
- 4) Engage Special Olympics at local/national level to raise awareness by:
  - activating athletes as self-advocates and peer health coaches, and activating family/community ambassadors
  - recognizing and rewarding community leaders

#### Roles

Local: Seek local health partners, host health screenings, identify self-advocates  
 Programs: Seek national/state health partners and funding, engage Government  
 SOI: Seek new global health partners, provide education materials and technology

#### Global Plan Targets

- 100 Programs that achieve Healthy Communities status
- \$25 million in additional resources for health
- 750 new health partnerships



## Building Positive Attitudes



### D. Improve external awareness through PR, celebrities and government engagement

#### The Challenge

Until now, creating positive attitudes has been a by-product, rather than a deliberate outcome, of what we do. We need to address this, because it is the critical link between sports and social change. Many people with ID still routinely face stigma and exclusion, so we need all parts of the movement – from local to global – to be more creative and more daring in how we use key influencers and the power of sport to challenge and transform people's attitudes.

#### What we will do and why

Special Olympics is a global organization that promotes social change and the equality of people with ID through sport, with athlete leaders to the fore. We will show how inclusion benefits everyone, not just people with ID and their families, balancing messages that highlight challenges with messages that emphasize the huge benefits of inclusion. We will integrate all our marketing activities to raise awareness of Special Olympics, and take full advantage of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2018. We will create tactics and materials to make Special Olympics relevant to different cultures and to change the way governments and the international development community view policy and programming for people with ID.

#### How we will do it

- 1) **Social Media/Media:** Everyone from local level to global level will need to create PR and media content that engages people outside the movement and gets their attention. As part of this, Special Olympics will work with media partners, athletes, celebrities and youth to improve how we make year-round use of social media and digital marketing. This will help Special Olympics to reach far wider audiences with relevant messages, personal experiences and campaigns such as "Play Unified" that are tailored for each Region.
- 2) **Celebrity Support:** We need to continue building a pool of highly talented celebrities to play external ambassador roles at all levels, including at local level. We will create opportunities for them to interact personally with our athletes to demonstrate real connection and reduce stigma.
- 3) **Government Relations:** We will engage governments to make changes to improve the lives of people with ID and support Special Olympics in their own country but also overseas through development assistance. Our first step will be to engage these influencers through personal interaction with our athletes, including at local program level. These unique occasions, supported by data to show our impact, will allow influencers to witness our athletes' courage and accomplishments and so better appreciate their contributions and needs.

#### Roles

Local: Publicize SO activities, approach celebrities and local government for support  
 Programs: Improve media, celebrity, government support; get behind campaigns  
 SOI: Develop marketing campaigns, attract new celebrities, influence governments

#### Global Plan Targets

- 7 million people publicly demonstrating support for inclusion (through social media, signing a pledge and/or Unified Sports participation)
- 5% change in awareness/attitudes following targeted exposure to SO
- 70 countries/states with new Government support for people with ID

## Building Positive Attitudes



### E. Connect the movement so we harness our power and speak with a collective voice

#### The Challenge

There are millions of people – athletes, families, volunteers, youth – involved in Special Olympics, but no easy way to connect and activate them as a whole. Many of these have poor access to technology. We need to find better ways to allow everyone to work and connect with each other using digital technology, and give our athletes and families more of a voice. We also need to retain those within the movement and keep in contact with people who engage with and support us regularly (e.g. people who post support online, attend events, sign a pledge).

#### What we will do and why

We will start internally to then impact externally. The first thing we will do is work together to get 'members' – athletes, families, volunteers, youth – and supporters in a new system that allows us to capture their data and interests, get their feedback and communicate more easily with them. This means finding solutions to technology challenges and data gathering at local and Program levels. The benefits are easier engagement of existing and new people, smoother communications and data entry, and the ability to help our members more over time.

Beyond this, it means that for the first time we will be able to communicate, share data and support each other across the whole movement, which makes everyone's work easier when it comes to Games, raising awareness and data tracking (e.g. Census). Building on this we will find better ways to share ideas, clarify messages and activate our members and supporters so we can communicate externally with "one voice". Using digital technology, with our athlete leaders and families to the fore, will ultimately make it a lot easier for us to be seen and heard by society, and break through the 'awareness ceiling' to be an even more influential movement.

#### How we will do it

- 1) Implement a new digital system to collect people's data, improve how it is used and respond quickly when new people interact with us so we can turn their passion into action. This will require collaboration at all levels to improve access to technology and collect, share and connect data on existing and new athletes, families, youth, volunteers and others who engage with us. We will provide training and support so that everyone can move to the new system.
- 2) Use the latest technology to make it easier for the members and supporters of our movement at all levels to connect, and share ideas and best practices.
- 3) Enable athlete leaders and families to speak with one voice, driving social transformation through telling their powerful stories. Engaging and connecting everyone in this way will mean that when it comes to fighting for recognition, rights or resources, we can speak as one global organization that will be hard for media, governments and other policy-makers to ignore.

#### Roles

Local: Help collect member/supporter data, attract new members, use new systems  
 Programs: Collaborate with SOI to implement new systems, collect data, share stories  
 SOI: Develop/roll out new systems, provide technology/materials for storytelling

#### Global Plan Targets

- 4 million members (athletes, volunteers, families) and supporters (e.g. people who engage online, attend events) whose details are in new database





## Building Positive Attitudes



### F. Maximize external impact of Games and competitions to showcase athletes' abilities

#### The Challenge

Special Olympics Games and competitions at all levels often struggle to achieve significant external impact and awareness, and we currently have inconsistency in the quality of the Games experience. Major Games are financially challenged, particularly World and Regional Games with their high relative cost. These events are managed by new Games Organizing Committees (GOCs) which often leads to varying levels of quality and impacts our ability to achieve external awareness.

#### What we will do and why

We will improve the consistency and quality of Games and competition experiences at all levels, especially for athletes. To deliver real value, we need to promote Games and competitions externally, and use them to change attitudes through attracting greater media coverage, more influencers and far more spectators. We will use World and Regional Games at Program and local levels to raise awareness so the whole movement benefits from these Games.

#### How we will do it

From local competitions through to World Games, we need to:

- 1) Deliver higher quality Games and competitions that prioritize athletes:
  - Enhance resources, processes, training and transfer of knowledge to improve how we run Games and competitions at all levels
  - Improve all aspects of competition management, from advancement to divisioning and consistent implementation of sports rules
  - Take proactive steps to attract/manage bids at Regional/World levels
  - Reposition GOCs as "Local/Host Organizing Committees" (L/HOCs)
- 2) Promote Games and competitions more effectively to achieve mass market external awareness and attract new supporters/influencers such as media:
  - Increase sports coverage related to competitions and athlete stories
  - Highlight athlete performance and personal bests
  - Refine the divisioning process, scheduling and information flows to make it easier for media and audiences to follow athletes and teams
  - Seek specific outcomes related to new supporters and influencers
  - Pay more attention to follow-up and long-term legacy from events
- 3) Attract larger attendances through activities at Games and competitions:
  - Greater opportunities to connect with Athletes: autographs, demos, clinics, Unified Sports Experiences
  - Spectator experiences, live entertainment and digital engagement
  - Deliberate tactics (e.g. campaigns/tickets) to target new spectators
- 4) Improve fundraising to ensure Games and competitions stay within budget:
  - Develop fundraising toolkits and revenue generation ideas for L/HOCs
  - Clarify World/Regional Games fundraising responsibilities
  - Align Games with global strategic plan and reduce costs where possible

#### Roles

Local: Improve local competitions, use new ways to attract spectators/media coverage  
 Programs: Strengthen event management, seek bigger crowds and more publicity  
 SOI: Provide event management/fundraising toolkits, improve World/Regional Games

#### Global Plan Targets

- 5% increase in positive attitudes following State/National/Regional/World Games
- At least 4 spectators for every athlete at State/National/Regional/World Games
- 70% of athletes/families having a high-quality Games experience



## Capacity - Building



### Build capacity through generating more Resources

#### The Challenge

While Special Olympics as a whole has continued to grow, funding has not kept pace with the need for program expansion. At all levels of the movement we do not have sufficient resources to make the maximum impact around the world. To support our strategies we need to greatly expand our ability to raise resources.

#### What we will do and why

We will look at resources globally to see if they can be used to achieve our vision in new ways. We will work with Programs to refine how Special Olympics is positioned and demonstrate our impact. We will expand digital fundraising, engagement with individual donors, and partnerships with corporations, while staying open to fundraising innovations. Our Global Development & Government Relations work will sustain existing high-value partnerships and build new partnerships with select government, donor and non-government organizations.

#### How we will do it

- 1) **Collaborative fundraising:** We will enhance joint-fundraising efforts between Programs and SOI through a tiered plan for market development. All Regions/Programs will be given tools and training to improve fundraising capacity, collaboration and innovation. Targeted Regions/Programs will get additional resources to build towards self-sufficiency. We will enhance our work with longstanding major funder, the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR).
- 2) **Digital fundraising:** This will be expanded and refined so that both SOI and targeted Programs can improve digital fundraising around the world. Current digital partners, industry experts and emerging technology will be used to maximize the potential of digital channels to grow revenue and increase and retain donors in order to maximize their lifetime value.
- 3) **Major individual donors:** Special Olympics will build stronger, more impactful relationships with individuals who have the capacity to make major gifts. Our aim is to use statistical modeling to hone in on prospective major donors and develop opportunities based on their interests and behavior. Tools and best practices will be shared so that we can make this a sustainable revenue source.
- 4) **Corporate partnerships:** We will target corporate partners identified by Programs and SOI, and seek opportunities to build alliances with international companies that filter to Program and local levels. As part of this we will create a revenue share program and define clear roles and responsibilities. A more comprehensive approach will also be taken to raising in-kind support.
- 5) **Global development/Government Relations:** In collaboration with Programs we will work with existing and new partners such as governments, bilateral and multilateral donors, development banks, and national/international NGOs to finance our inclusive sports and health work. We will work with governments to promote adoption of policies and investments that provide opportunities for people with ID and ensure these opportunities are sustainable in the long-term.

#### Roles

Programs: Use new training/tools to try new approaches, collaborate with SOI  
SOI: Provide enhanced training/tools, use new technology, collaborate with Program

#### Global Targets

- 25% increase in money raised by Programs and SOI
- 25% increase in value in kind raised by Programs and SOI



## Capacity - Building



### Build capacity through strengthening Leadership, including athlete leadership

#### The Challenge

The right leadership, with the right support and knowledge, is the number one catalyst for the success of any Special Olympics Program. We need to focus primarily on program leaders, as many have not had adequate learning and development opportunities up to now. If we can change this, coupled with an emphasis on striving for excellence, we believe it will significantly enhance our quality, ability to grow and overall impact. We also need to improve the diversity of our leadership in some parts of the world, and greatly increase opportunities for athlete and youth leaders.

#### What we will do and why

We will work to develop visionary, effective Program Leaders (Leadership Excellence), and a culture of growth, innovation and excellence amongst our Accredited Programs (Program Excellence). We will strive for targeted Programs to have full-time CEOs/National Directors with access to quality training, and increased collaboration between Program Boards and SOI on recruitment and succession planning. Programs and SOI will continue working to improve quality to a point where Programs have the capacity to successfully deliver our strategy.

#### How we will do it

- 1) **Recruitment and talent development:** Improve how we recruit the right leaders and ensure diverse, representative leadership. We will strive for self-sustaining full-time leaders in Programs with high potential. We will take a collaborative approach to improve talent development, succession planning and working to ensure CEOs/National Directors are appointed with SOI support and guidance.
- 2) **Training and development:** Grow the Special Olympics Leadership Academy, which started with leadership development workshops, to include a wider range of in-person and online training and development opportunities for Program Leaders. As part of this, we will use training partners and use the great leaders we have (e.g. leadership councils) to mentor emerging leaders.
- 3) **Quality improvement:** Promote Program Excellence using the Program Quality Standards and Accreditation. These tools will be used to set a clear and consistent pathway for achieving and recognizing improvements in quality. We will also provide guidance on volunteer management and how to establish and support strong local/community level Special Olympics programs.
- 4) **Athlete Leadership:** We will broaden athlete leadership development work. Aside from enhancing courses and materials, we will integrate athlete leadership into Program Leadership training to ensure athlete leaders are embraced and provided meaningful roles. In this way they can 'learn by doing' and contribute to the success of all aspects of this strategic plan. We will continue to promote choice for athlete leaders in the roles they perform, and foster quality mentorship. We will also train youth leaders with and without ID on inclusion, building towards an "inclusive leadership" approach for all of these groups.

#### Roles

Local: Provide opportunities for athlete/youth leaders, achieve quality standards  
 Programs: Ensure athlete/youth leader input, use training/quality standards to improve  
 SOI: Increase leadership training opportunities, provide tools to help Programs

#### Global Plan Targets

- 35 Program leader roles changed from voluntary to paid
- 140 Programs achieving new Program quality standards each year
- 15,000 athlete leaders and 10,000 youth leaders in meaningful leadership roles